تحليل نقدي لطائفة منكري السنة

A critical analysis of the Modernists and Hadeeth Rejecters

by Sajid A. Kayum

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تحليل نقدي لطائفة منكري السنة

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Overview

As Muslims, we are obliged to believe and understand our religion in a manner that Allah wants us to. The way to achieve this is mentioned in the Qur'aan. Allah says, "And if they believe as you (i.e., the Sahabah) believe then they are rightly guided, but if they turn away, then they are only in opposition." [Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 137] In light of this verse, the correct understanding is what emulates the beliefs and understandings of the Sahabah (the Prophet's Companions).

The Sahabah were the fortunate people who accompanied the Prophet ﷺ and learned the religion directly from him ﷺ. They witnessed the revelation of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and experienced the circumstances in which they were revealed. The Sahabah's understanding of the religion is therefore, the most pure

and perfect, and they are a group that has definitely succeeded in achieving what Faith is meant to achieve, i.e. Allah's Pleasure. “And the first to embrace Islam of the Muhajirun (those who migrated from Makkah to al-Medina) and the Ansar (the people of al-Medina who helped the Muhajirun) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success.” [Soorah at-Tawbah (9):100]

Apathy towards the understanding of the Sahabah as well as free interpretation of Islamic texts are the primary causes of misconceptions and confusion; and consequently straying from the path of the 'the rightly guided'. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "This Ummah (nation) will split into seventy-three sects, all of them in the Fire except one." They asked, "What is that sect?” He ﷺ said, "That which I and my Companions are upon today." [at-Tabaraanee]

Ilmul-Kalaam (argumentation based on Greek philosophy) is among such innovations in the religion that created intellectual schisms in the Muslim nation and initiated deviant trends. One of the sects that indulged in Ilmul-Kalaam were the Mu'tazilah. They gave precedence to intellect over the revealed texts of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah - when they perceived the two conflicted. This attitude set an evil precedent for all later groups who sought to make intellect and desire decisive over the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. In this book, we shall critique such modernist groups that attempt to impose novel interpretations upon Islamic teachings.

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It is important to clarify from the onset that condemning 'modernism' is rejecting illegitimate interpretations in religious matters and not about opposing science and technology, or about rejecting benefit from information and awareness that mankind constantly improves with time. What is eternal and ever-relevant according to Islam are the teachings revealed by Allah – the Most High and since Prophethood ends with Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, his teachings will be preserved and applicable until the time people need Guidance.

The Two Modernist Trends

One trend of Modernists are the self-proclaimed 'Islam-experts' and 'Muslim-reformers' that we see all to often paraded on major media outlets. They openly demand reformation in Islam and call for a 'progressive' interpretation of Islamic values. Their catch phrases are “humane Islam”, “gender-friendly Islam”, “Islam 2.0”, “Progressive Islam” and the like.

Their newly-found activity gained momentum with the emergence of violent extremist elements that misinterpret Islam to create chaos and cause hardship for Muslims. This began a search for an alternate, sensible and moderate voice - a voice that can expect state funding and favors.

The lucrative opportunity thus created has attracted an assembly-line of individuals with a history of apathy for Islam and Muslims, to masquerade as champions of the 'oppressed Muslim woman', good-governance for Muslim nations, human rights, etc. They claim to be the moderate voice and speak in a language that the media, especially the western

media, likes to hear. They persist in this even if it alienates Muslims and reinforces biased stereotypes about Islam. In the name of 'progressive thinking', they organize campaigns against the head-covering for women, for women to pray in mosques alongside men, for the acceptance of lewdness, and other similar issues. They seek to misinterpret Islamic texts in light of rational thought, modern values and even feelings and desires for, they consider the rational (Aql) and desires decisive over the revealed texts (Naql).

Another group that is an equally staunch patron of free-thinking and modernist interpretations is that of the so-called 'Islamic-thinkers' and activists. Their primary goal is political power and thus, their novel interpretations are aimed at supporting their revolutionary goals and undermining genuine priorities of Islamic Dawah that they see as a hurdle or a distraction from their primary goal.

Politically, the two modernist groups are poles apart. The 'progressive thinkers' are extreme secularist while the 'Islamic-thinkers' are ardent callers to the Khilafah - however distorted their views may be about it. But the two are similar in making Aql decisive over Naql, in their apathy towards Hadeeth, in their emphasis on modernistic interpretations of the Qur'aan, and in their unjustified toughening or lightening of Islamic regulations for the achievement of political/organizational goals.

The vocal participation of these media-savvy modernist groups in speaking about Islam and affairs of the Muslims has resulted in the spread of a lot of confusion and misinformation. In this book, Insha'Allah, we shall critically analyze the Modernists,

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beginning by understanding the deviations of the Mu'tazilah sect. We shall see with examples;

a) the rejection of Kalaam by the scholars and Imams of the Muslims,

b) the turmoil that the Mutazilah brought upon the Islamic world as a result of their Kalaam and,

c) the ill-effects of philosophy on pious and knowledgeable scholars who indulged in it and later abandoned it.

We shall study the views of the 'Muslim' rationalists (al-Aqlaniyah), a group that emerged towards the end of the colonial era and found intellectual nourishment in the views of the Mutazilah. Impressed by Western advances in science and technology, they sought inspiration from the west for the advancement of Muslim societies, assimilating along the way 'Modernist' attitudes towards religion that had gained popularity amongst European Christians and Jews.

The European Modernist agenda was primarily aimed at settling the conflict between religion and rationality with the help of philosophy. On their part, 'Muslim' Modernists attempted to reject or alter those teachings of the Qur'aan and Sunnah that they saw as hindrances, and turned to the Mu'tazilah and 'Muslim' philosophers for guidance.

We shall see in this booklet the close resemblance between Christian and Jewish Modernists on one hand, and the 'Muslim' modernist and progressives on the other. We shall analyze the views that have

become the hallmark of the Modernist call and expose their remoteness from Islam.

Lastly, we shall comment on the most outrageous antics of present-day 'progressives', expose their hatred for Islamic teachings and report on the complete failure of their call.

The second section of this booklet deals with the misguidance of rejecting Hadeeth as this is another malady afflicting all Mu'tazili influenced groups whether the Modernists, the Progressives, the Secularists or the pseudo-Islamists. The refutation focuses upon analyzing the views of three prominent rejecters of Hadeeth; Rashad Khalifah, Ghulam Parvez and Amin Ahsan Islahi.

The two sections of the book greatly complement each other as the modernists and the hadeeth rejecters are two sides of the same coin.

All in all, this booklet should provide a good overview towards understanding the many misguided views that emanate from varied groups influenced by the Mu'tazilah.

May Allah make us amongst "Those who listen to the Word (good advice La ilaha ill-Allah) and follow the best thereof." [Soorah Az-Zumar (39): 18]

Mu'tazilah Aqlaniyah and the Modernists

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Mu'tazilah is the sect responsible for popularizing ideas of ancient pagan philosophy to the Muslim Ummah in the name of 'Ilmul-Kalaam', by which they caused much confusion with regards to the status of Qur'aan and Sunnah, and attempted to make intellect (Aql) decisive over the texts of the Deen. They paved a way where well-established Islamic beliefs (like Attributes of Allah, matters of Ghayb, etc.) and acts of worship were questioned and argued about, then distorted or abandoned.

From amongst their off-shoots are the modern-day Aqlaniyyah (rationalists), the Modernists, Munkareen al-Hadeeth (the Hadeeth Rejecters) and the Secularists. Each of these groups is distinct in its goals and approach, but they all depend upon the same Mu'tazili principles by which they justify their heretical views.

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Philosophy
and its conflict with Islam

"Philosophy in general means 'wisdom', and a philosopher came to be referred to as wise man (hakeem).

The word, 'philosophy' refers to the study of basic principles, viewing knowledge as something based on rationality, the goal of which was the search for truth.

Philosophy is a liberal rational examination that is free from any restrictions and external authority with the ability to go all the way on the basis of logic regardless of the difference between the (philosophical) views and religious beliefs, and dictates of tradition; and without being confronted or resisted or punished by any authority." [al-Mawsoo'ah al-Muyassarah fi'l-Adyaan wa'l-Madhaahib al-Mu'aasirah (2/1118-1121) courtesy: islamqa.com (slighted adapted)]

It is evident by the definition itself that philosophy is opposed to Faith in Islam for a number of fundamental reasons;

1. In Islam, knowledge is based upon Divine revelation while the role of rational is limited to appreciating the revelation. We are commanded to believe and accept every aspect of the religion; even those which the mind cannot fully comprehend like matters of the Ghayb (unseen). The wisdom behind this is to distinguish the sincere believers from those who are insincere. "None dispute regarding the Ayaat (revelations, signs, proofs) of Allah except those who disbelieve." [Soorah Ghafir (40): 4]

   Allah is the Creator of reason, and He is the One Who issues the command. The true believer is he who responds and submits, and says, "I hear and I believe and obey, even though I do not understand the reason." He admits his mortality, weakness and submission to Allah, Who cannot be questioned as to what He does because His Commands are based upon Divine Wisdom and Divine Justice.

   This is how the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ submitted to the Deen as Imam al-Bukharee (1597) recorded in his Saheeh that Umar ibn Khattab رضي الله عنه said of the Black Stone when he kissed it, "By Allah, I know that you are only a stone and you can neither bring benefit nor cause harm. Were it not that I had seen the Messenger of Allah kissing you, I would not have kissed you."

2. Hikmah (lit. wisdom) in Islam refers to the Sunnah as defined by the majority of the scholars of Hadeeth and Fuqaha (jurists), and the Sunnah is the judge and criteria to distinguish truth from falsehood.

3. If philosophy is the search for truth then with the achievement of faith, the search of a Muslim has come to an end because "...after the truth, what else can there be, save error?" [Soorah Yunus (10): 32]

4. According to Islam, for the faith (Eeman) to be established, it is not enough to have mere Tasdeeq in the heart (i.e. recognition, knowledge and affirmation of Allah and His Commandments). It must be accompanied by Inqiyad of the heart (i.e., acceptance and submission to Allah and His Commands), as well as actions of the limbs.

Those who use philosophy in examining Islamic knowledge must - to be true to philosophy - have some degree of doubt and skepticism about the truth of Islamic teachings. This doubt will definitely negate Inqiyad (i.e, wholehearted submission) that is a pillar of Faith, and will lead to major disbelief (Kufr ash-Shakh - Apostasy of Doubt) that takes someone out of Islam. Faith in Allah therefore with complete submission at it's core is fundamentally opposed to the way of the philosophers.

(This is an extremely important and fundamental concept which needs to be understood, for a detailed explanation, refer to our book, 'Eeman and its components and explaining the misguidance of the Khawaarij and the Murji'ah'.)

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Amongst the earliest of the so-called 'Muslim philosophers' was the Persian, al-Farabi (872CE/259AH - 950 CE/339AH). He was a translator and author of many commentaries on Aristotle's (a Greek philosopher) works, for which he was called, 'the Second Teacher' (Aristotle being the first). He greatly influenced the philosophers who followed him, particularly Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes).

Al-Farabi agreed with Aristotle's view that the philosopher is of a higher status than a Prophet because the philosopher understands issues by means of reason and contemplation while the Prophet - as the philosophers claim - understands things by means of imagination which in their view is inferior to logic. (*1)

Philosophy is therefore one of the most dangerous falsehoods and most vicious in fighting faith in the name of logic and reason. The Salaf unanimously rejected philosophy whilst strongly condemning it.

(*1) A Prophet's understanding is based on revelation and guidance from Allah and not imagination

Imam ash-Shaafa'i said, "The people did not become ignorant and begin to differ until they abandoned Arabic terminology and adopted the terminology of Aristotle. Even though, philosophy existed in the ancient civilizations of Egypt, India and Persia; it became most famous in Greece, and became synonymous with that land. The reason being that the Greek philosophers were interested in transmitting it from the legacy of idolatrous peoples and the remnants of the divinely-revealed religions, benefiting from the scriptures of Ibraheem عليه السلام and Moosa عليه السلام after the Greek victory over the Hebrews following the captivity in Babylon, and benefiting from the religion of Luqmaan, the Wise. So there was an amalgam of views that confirmed the Divinity and Lordship of the Creator, but were contaminated with idolatry." [courtesy: islamqa.com]

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'Ilmul-Kalaam'
and sects that pursued it

Before the appearance of outright-philosophers in the Muslim Ummah like al-Farabi, a philosophical discipline crept amongst Muslims in the name of 'Ilmul-Kalaam'.

Kalaam is a way or mode of argumentation that has its origin in Greek Philosophy. It is thus, a reprehensible innovation that initiated unnecessary argumentation and confusion in the Ummah. The sects that indulged in it however, insist that it is merely a tool to prove the truthfulness of Islam, and not a judge to analyze its veracity.

The first groups to pursue and indulge in Ilmul-Kalaam were the Qadariyyah, the Mu'tazilah and the Jahmiyyah. The influence of Ilmul-Kalaam led them astray in many issues of belief. After the Mu'tazilah, it was absorbed by the Ash'aris and the Maturidis, who used Ilmul-Kalaam to argue with the Mu'tazilah. They in turn, sought to rationally prove and justify their 'fundamental tenants of faith' by means of 'Kalaam, which on the issue of the Attributes of Allah, amounts to approving only a few Attributes whilst nullifying others. Thus for the Ash'aris and the Maturidis, 'Ilmul-Kalaam' holds special significance as it is the defender of their beliefs; even though their senior-most scholars like al-Fakhr ar-Razi and al-Juwayenee regretted having indulged in Kalaam towards the end of their lives.

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Major Deviations of the Mu'tazilah

Mu'tazilah comes from the word, '*I'tazaal*', i.e., 'to withdraw.' The group is named such because its founder 'Waasil Ibn Ataa' withdrew (*I'tazala*) from the study circles of Hassan al-Basri after proposing an innovative idea on the status of Muslims who commit major sins (i.e. whether they are believers or disbelievers). From then on the Mu'tazilah deviated further and increased in misguidance under the influence of *Ilmul-Kalaam* in many issues of belief;

1. Five innovated Usool (principles) of the Mu'tazilah

I) Tawheed (Oneness of Allah) which according to the Mu'tazilah is complete denial of Allah's Attributes.

Their theory of belief concerning Allah's Names is approval by the tongue and rejection by the heart; i.e., they merely affirm the Names without affirming any meaning for them. For example, they affirm by the tongue that Allah is 'As-Samee (All-Hearer),' but reject True Hearing for Him.

ii) Adl (Justice), which to the Mu'tazilah, is denying that Allah is the Creator of the actions of the slaves. They also deny that actions of the slaves are subject to Qadr (pre-decree). According to them, a person is independent of Qadr and Power of Allah in his will and ability of action.

iii) Wa'd wal-Wa'eed (Warning and cautioning) which in their understanding is to enforce and warn that Allah neither accepts Shafa'ah (intercession) on behalf of someone who commits major sin, nor does He take him out of Hell-Fire.

iv) Manzilah baynal-Manzilatain (state between the two states). The idea that a Muslim who commits a major sin, is in a state between Eeman and Kufr (*1) with respect to this world; and in the Hereafter, he will be in Hell-Fire eternally if he dies without repentance.

v) Amr bil-Ma'roof wa-Nahi anil-Munkar (enjoining the good and forbidding the evil), which according to them is disobedience to the ruler and raising the sword against him.

2) Denial of seeing Allah in the Hereafter.

(*1) It is irrational that one is neither a believer nor a disbeliever! Whereas Allah classifies mankind into two outright groups, “He it is Who created you, then some of you are disbelievers and some of you are believers.” [Soorah at-Taghabun (64): 2] Allah did not say that some of you are in a state between the two states!!

3) Their innovated belief that the Qur'aan is a creation of Allah. (The belief of Ahlus-Sunnah is that the Qur'aan is the uncreated literal Kalaam (Speech) of Allah).

4) Defaming the Sahabah and the Taba'een, especially the narrators of hadeeth like Abu Hurayrah ﷺ☒

5) Denying various issues of the Ghayb (unseen) like the angels, jinn, magic, etc.

6) Most importantly, undue veneration of Aql (intellect) and giving it priority over Naql (texts of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah) which resulted in deviations like;

- **i) Ta'weel** (i.e., giving an interpretation different from the apparent meaning) of Qur'aanic verses which they considered contradictory to Aql.
- **ii) Rejection of Ahadeeth** which were deemed contradictory to Aql - even if they were mutawathir or collected in the two saheehs (Saheeh al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim).
- **iii) Rejection of Ahaad Ahadeeth,** which form the major part of the Hadeeth compilation, because according to them, Ahaad Ahadeeth do not give the benefit of certain-knowledge.

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An Important note on the harmony between sound intellect & Quran and Sunnah

"Contradiction between a clear text of the Book and the Sunnah and the sound Aql cannot be imagined and is in fact impossible. So if there appears to be a contradiction between the two then the Revelation is given precedence and is decisive since it comes from the One, Who is infallible, whereas the Aql (intellect) of a person is not infallible. Indeed, Aql is the deficient opinion of humans that is open to misconception, error, forgetfulness, desires and ignorance."

[end quote from, 'The Principles of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah in deriving Aqeedah' by Nasir al-Aql]

Philosophical groups who assumed that religious texts contradict reason, tried to mediate between reason and the transmitted reports. This led them to force reason into fields where it had no place. So they came up with false rulings that led them to say that they did not know what the texts meant and that only Allah knows their meaning, or to misinterpret them altogether, like the philosophical groups who went

astray concerning the Attributes of Allah; Jahmiyah, Mu'tazilah and Asha'irah who either denied or misinterpreted the Names and Attributes of Allah instead of accepting them without reservations.

Ibn Hajr (rahimahullah) writes in Sharh al-Bukharee,

> "...The Salaf intensified their rejection of these trends, such as Abu Haneefah, Abu Yusuf and ash-Shafa'ee and their refutation of the Ahlul-Kalaam is well known. The reason behind such severe censure is that the Ahlul-Kalaam discussed issues concerning which Allah's Messenger ﷺ and his Sahabah ﷺ had acquired silence.
>
> Those who came after the three generations, magnified upon the issues... They did not contend themselves until they confused the fundamental issues of Deen with philosophy, which they considered to be the Asl (the foundation) (instead of the texts of the Deen), to which everything had to be referred to and they made Ta'weel (interpretations) of all narrations that contradicted their philosophy. They did not stop at that. They further claimed that their compilations were the noblest knowledge and most deserving to be studied and whosoever did not make use of their interpretation was an ignorant layman.
>
> Thus, fortunate is he who holds on to the way of the Salaf and refrains from the innovations of the Khalaf (the late-comers) and if he is unable to do so, he should only take what is needed and make the way of the Salaf his basic goal."
>
> [Fath al-Baree (13/253)]

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Reasons for the Spread of Mu'tazili Ideology

a) Prevalence of excessive debate on the status of a Muslim who commits a major sin due to the extreme position taken on the subject by the Khawarij (who judge such a person as outright Kafir) and the Murji'ah (who consider such a person to be a Mumin with perfect faith). (*1)

The Mu'tazilah presented their seemingly moderate solution to the argument that such a Muslim is neither a believer, nor an outright Kafir (disbeliever), but is between the two states.

(*1) The Khawarij fell into this misguidance due to their exaggeration in understanding the texts of warning (i.e., the verses that dictate punishments of sins), while the Murjiyah were deficient in the same as explained by Shaikh Bakr ibn Abdullah Abu Zaid in Dar' al-Fitna 'an Ahlus-Sunnah. [Learn more about their deviated views and their refutation with references from the writings of the scholars in our booklet, 'Eeman and its components, and explaining the misguidance of the Khawarij and the Murjiyah on the issue.]

(*2) According to the understanding of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, a Muslim who is guilty of major sin is not outside the fold of Islam. He may be punished for his major and minor sins in the Hereafter or be forgiven by Allah.

b) Mu'tazilah who remained discredited throughout the Umayyad rule gained a position of prominence and influence during the Abbasids era when Ma'mun (212H /827 CE) came to power and appointed them as judges within the state.

At the behest of the Mu'tazilite theologians, who attributed themselves to Imam Abu Hanifa in jurisprudence, Ma'mun subjected the scholars, who opposed the Mu'tazili views, to severe persecution. This policy continued during the reign of the next two Abbasid rulers, al-Mu'tasim and al-Wathiq.

c) Translation of numerous books on Greek Philosophy under the patronage of Ma'mun who was interested in having Aristotle's work translated.

"He (Ma'mun) wrote to the Roman Emperor requesting him to send all of Aristotle's works available to him. The Emperor hesitated. He consulted his Christian scholars, who suggested, 'The books on philosophy are under lock and key in our country, and none is allowed to read and teach them because they expel respect for religion from the people's heart. We must send these books to the Caliph of Islam so that the publicity of philosophy will dampen the religious spirit of the Muslims.' The Emperor had five camels loaded with these books and sent them to Mamoon Rasheed." [end quote from History of Islam (vol.2) by Akbar Shah Najeebabadi] These books were then translated by Christian scholars assigned by Mamoon.

d) Mu'tazilah used 'Ilmul-Kalaam' to argue in defense of Islam, thus portraying themselves as defenders of the faith.

A testament of the great ordeals caused by the Mu'tazilah

Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal's Trial

The innovated idea of the Qur'aan being a creation engulfed the Ummah at the time of Imam Ahmad when the Mu'tazilah used the ruler's sword to force scholars and jurists into accepting it.

Caliph Ma'mon (himself a student of the Abu al-Huzail al-Allaf - a Mu'tazili), was instigated by his Qadhi (chief-judge) Ahmad ibn Abee Dawood to persecute anyone who resisted the innovated idea.

Four scholars stood up to the Fitna (trial), but only Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal and Mohammad ibn Nuh kept steadfast. As a result, they were imprisoned and taken in chains to Tartoos where Ma'moon had summoned them.

It is reported in books of history that Ma'moon sent a messenger to Imam Ahmad with a threatening message that a sword - that had not been used on anyone else - had been prepared for Imam Ahmad. Upon hearing this, Imam Ahmad said, "I ask Allah to suffice me, for what is (this life) but a short while."

During the journey, Muhammad ibn Nuh passed away. Imam Ahmad invoked Allah that he should not meet Ma'moon. Allah answered his prayer and Ma'moon died a sudden death, before he

could encounter Imam Ahmad. Imam Ahmad was then returned to prison. The Caliphate passed on to Mu'tasim, who was instructed by Ma'moon to keep close to Ibn Abu Dawood and continue the persecution. Mu'tasim summoned Imam Ahmad and arranged a gathering with Ibn Abee Dawood and his companions on the issue of Khalq al-Qur'aan. Despite many arguments and efforts by the Mu'tazilah, they were unable to overcome Imam Ahmad, and the gathering dragged on for two days.

On the third day, the gathering continued and Imam Ahmad was asked, "What do you say about the Qur'aan?" to which he replied, "The Speech of Allah is not a creation. Allah says, "And if anyone of the polytheist seeks your protection then grant him protection, so that he may hear the Word of Allah." [Soorah at-Tawbah (9): 6]

He was asked to present more proof to which Imam Ahmad replied with the following verse, "The Most Beneficent! Has taught the Qur'aan." [Soorah ar-Rahman (55): 6] Imam Ahmad argued that Allah has nowhere referred to the Qur'aan as Khalq al-Qur'aan.

Imam Ahmad was summoned once more in front of Mu'tasim, but this time the swords were unsheathed and the spears were pointing at him. Mu'tasim questioned Imam Ahmad about his position only to receive the same reply. Mu'tasim threatened Imam Ahmad with murder upon which Imam Ahmad said, "O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "The blood of a Muslim who testifies La ilaha illa Allah is not Halaal to be spilled except in three cases..." So what is that which makes my blood permissible to be spilled while I have not done any of the three? O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, remember your standing

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before Allah the way I am standing before you."

Imam Ahmad's steadfastness and determination weakened Mu'tasim's resolve, but Ibn Abee Dawood instigated, "O Ameerul-Mu'mineen, if you leave him, it will be said that you abandoned the madhhab of Ma'moon."

This infuriated the Chaliph who ordered Imam Ahmad to be taken back to prison.

The next day Imam Ahmad was brought back from the prison to be whipped even though it was Ramadaan and he was fasting. Mu'tasim came along with two executioners who were ordered to be inconsiderate and they whipped Imam Ahmad in turns.

Mu'tasim then addressed Imam Ahmad, "Repeat what I say that the Qur'aan is Makhlooq (a creation)."

Imam Ahmad insisted, "Bring me a proof from the Book of Allah or the Saying of Allah's Messenger."

Imam Ahmad was then stripped off all his clothes except his lower garment. He was whipped until he would loose consciousness. The whipping would continue every time he regained consciousness.

Imam Ahmad says, "My mind went blank and nothing would come to my mind except the fear that my private parts would be exposed."

Imam Ahmad was then transferred to his house and his ordeal left him unable to walk. When his wounds healed and he regained strength, Imam Ahmad would preach in the mosque, He was not prevented from teaching until the caliphate passed on to Mu'tasim's successor Wathiq.

Wathiq too was instigated by Ibn Abu Dawood and his evil companions to coerce the people into accepting the Qur'aan as a creation. Wathiq however did not find it in his interest to imprison Imam Ahmad. So he ordered Imam Ahmad to leave. Imam Ahmad thus sought refuge away from public view for five years. Towards the end of his caliphate, Allah guided Wathiq to retreat from his deviation due of an interesting incident. People were being brought before Wathiq in shackles and were being forced to accept that the Qur'aan is a creation. Anyone who resisted was killed.

A man amongst them greeted Wathiq, "As-Salaam alaikum, O Ameerul-Mu'mineen,"

to which Wathiq retorted, "Neither has Allah saved you, nor there be any salaam (safety) on you."

The man said, "Verily, he who has nurtured you did not do it well." He was referring to Wathiq's mentor Ibn Abu Dawood who was also present there. The man recited the verse, "When you are greeted with a greeting, greet in return with what is better than it or (at least) return it equally." [Soorah an-Nisa (4): 86] and then said, "You have not replied me with the same or the better."

The caliph was astonished and ordered Ibn Abu Dawood to debate with him.

Ibn Abu Dawood asked him, "What do you say about the Qur'aan?"

The man said, "You have not done justice to me, I should initiate."

The caliph agreed and the man asked, "What do you say about the Qur'aan? O Ibn Abu Dawood."

He replied, "I say that the Qur'aan is

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Makhlooq (a creation)."

The man said, "This saying of yours with which you have burdened the people and the caliph with, did the Messenger ﷺ, Abu Bakr and Umar say this or not?"

Ibn Abu Dawood replied, "They did not say it."

He asked, "Did they know it or were they ignorant of it?"

Ibn Abu Dawood said, "They knew it."

The man said, "Was this issue kept open to be silent about or were the people burdened with it?"

Ibn Abu Dawood said, "No, rather they kept silent."

The man said, "Something which Allah's Messenger, Abu Bakr and Umar kept silent about, you have not followed suit."

So Ibn Abu Dawood kept quite.

Wathiq freed the man and after solitary deliberation, he revoked his statement that the Qur'aan was created.

After the death of Wathiq, the righteous-caliph al-Mutawakkil came to office. He ordered an end to all indulgence in the issue.

Imam Ahmad's trials finally ended, and his patience and steadfastness in upholding the Aqeedah of Ahlus-Sunnah bore fruit. The issue of the innovated idea of Khalq al-Qur'aan disintegrated; and along with it, the strength of the Mu'tazilah.

Imam Ahmad passed away in 241H. Seven hundred thousand men and sixty thousand women attended his funeral. With this came true the saying of Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal,

"Say to the people of Bidah,

between us and you are the funerals."

Imam Abu Hanifa's condemnation of Kalaam

Imam Abu Hanifa said,

"May Allah's Curse be upon Amr ibn Ubaid for he paved for the people the way to Kalaam..."

[Dhamul-Kalaam lil-Harawee, p.28-31]

Someone asked him (i.e., Imam Abu Hanifa), "What is your opinion about that which he has innovated for the people with regards to Kalaam about accidents and bodies?"

He said, "Principles of philosophy!!! Stick to the way of the Salaf, for every novelty is a Bidah (innovation in the religion)."

[Manaqib Abi Haneefah of al-Kurdi (baa/p.194)
Quoted from A'tiqaad al-A'imma al-Arba'a]

Imam Abu Haneefa also said,

"The people of desires in al-Basrah are many and I have entered it odd twenty times. Perhaps, I stayed there for a year or more thinking that Ilmul-Kalaam is the greatest of sciences."

[Manaqib Abi Haneefah of al-Kurdi (p.137)
Quoted from A'tiqaad al-A'imma al-Arba'a]

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Hammad ibn Abi Haneefa related, "My father (i.e., Imam Abu Hanifa rahimahullah) entered upon me one day and accompanying me was a group of Ashab al-Kalaam; and we were arguing at a door. So when I heard him approaching the house, I went out to him.

He asked me, 'O Hammad, who is with you?'

I replied, 'So and so,' and I named those who were with me.

He then advised me, 'O Hammad, abandon Kalaam.'

He (Hammad) says, 'My father was neither a man who confused matters, nor was he from those who command something and then prohibit it.' So I asked him, 'O father did you not used to command me with it?'

He said, 'Yes, my son and today I prohibit you from it.'

Hammad said, 'Why is that?'

He said, 'Verily, these are people of Kalaam - you will see they were upon one statement and one religion until Shaytan came between them and sow discord and differing...'

Despite Imam Abu Hanifa's condemnation of Kalaam; many of those who claim to follow his madhhab like the Maturidis and Deobandis continue their indulgence in Kalaam.

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Imam al-Ghazzali's rejection of Philosophy and Kalaam

Imam al-Ghazzali, the well-known author of the book 'Ihyaa Uloom ad-Deen', was a person of rare level of intelligence, ingenuity and cleverness.

He went through a number of stages. He indulged in philosophy, and then he recanted and rejected it. Then he indulged in Ilmul-Kalaam and gained a sound grasp of its basic principles and used it to refute philosophy; but later rejected Ilmul-Kalaam when it became clear to him that it was corrupt and filled with contradictions, he then followed the path of the Batiniyyah (esotericisms) and learned their knowledge, but rejected that too. He showed the beliefs of the Baatiniyyah to be false, and exposed the manner in which they tamper with the texts and rulings. Then he followed the path of Sufism. These are the four stages that al-Ghazzali went through.

Even though, al-Ghazzali had a deep knowledge of Sufism, Ilmul-Kalaam, Usool al-fiqh, etc., and he was a devoted worshiper with good intentions, he could not completely free himself from philosophy.

His closest companion, Abu Bakr ibn al-Arabi refuted his ideas saying, "Our shaykh Abu Haamid went deep into philosophy then he wanted to come out of it but he was unable to. There were

narrated from him opinions which sound like the Baatini way of speaking, and that may be verified by looking in al-Ghazzali's books." [See Majmoo al-Fatawa, (4/66)]

Shaikhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (rahimahullah) said,

> "If we assume that someone narrated the view of the Salaf but what he narrated is far removed from what the view of the Salaf actually is, then he has little knowledge of the view of the Salaf, such as Abu'l-Ma'aali, Abu Haamid al-Ghazzali, Ibn al-Khateeb and the like, who did not have enough knowledge of hadeeth to qualify them as ordinary scholars of hadeeth, let alone as prominent scholars in that field for none of these people had any knowledge of al-Bukharee and Muslim and their ahadeeth apart from what they heard, which is similar to the situation of the ordinary Muslim, who cannot distinguish between a hadeeth which is regarded as saheeh and mutawatir according to the scholars of hadeeth and a hadeeth which is fabricated and false.
>
> Their books bear witness to that because they contain strange things and most of these scholars of Ilmul-Kalaam and Sufis who have drifted away from the path of the Salaf admit that either at the time of death or before death. There are many such well-known stories.
>
> This Abu Haamid al-Ghazzali, despite his brilliance, his devotion to Allah, his knowledge of kalaam and philosophy, his asceticism and spiritual practices and his Sufism ended up in a state of confusion and resorted to the path of those who claim to find out things through dreams and spiritual methods."

[Majmoo al-Fatawa (4/71)]

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Ibn Taymiyah also said,

"Hence, even though Abu Haamid refuted the philosophers and classed them as kuffar (disbelievers), and expressed veneration of Prophethood [as opposed to philosophy], etc., and even though some of what he says is true and good, and indeed of great benefit, nevertheless some of his writings contain philosophical material and matters where he followed the corrupt principles of philosophy that contradict Prophethood and even contradict sound common sense."

Adh-Dhahabi narrated in his book, *Siyar A'laam an-Nubula* that Muhammad ibn al-Waleed al-Tartooshi said,

"...he became a Sufi and forsook knowledge and its people, then he got involved with 'inspiration' - those who claim to have spiritual knowledge and the insinuating whispers of the Shaytan.

Then he mixed that with the views of the philosophers and the symbolic phrases of al-Hallaaj. He started to criticize the fuqaha (jurists) and the scholars of Ilmul-Kalaam. He almost went astray from the religion altogether when he wrote al-Ihya [i.e., Ihya Uloom al-Deen]. He started to speak of the inspiration and symbolic words of the Sufis although he was not qualified to do that and had no deep knowledge of such matters. Hence he failed and filled his book with fabricated reports,

"I (ad-Dhahabi) say, "as for al-Ihya, it contains many false ahadeeth and it contains much that is good. I wish that it did not contain etiquette, rituals and asceticism that are in accordance with the ways of the philosophers and deviant Sufis. We ask Allah for beneficial knowledge.

Do you know what beneficial knowledge is? It is that which Allah revealed in the Qur'aan, which was explained by the Messenger ﷺ in word and deed, and the type of knowledge which we are not forbidden to acquire. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Whoever turns away from my Sunnah does not belong to me." So, my brother, you must ponder over the Words of Allah and persist in studying al-Saheehayn (Saheeh al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim), Sunan al-Nasa'ee, Riyadh an-Nawawi and al-Adhkaar by an-Nawawi, and then you will succeed and prosper.

Beware of the opinions of the philosophers, the practice of spiritual exercises, the starvation of monks, and the nonsense talk of those who stay alone for long periods in their monasteries. All goodness is to be found in following the pure and tolerant way of the haneefs. And seek the help of Allah. O Allah, guide us to Your straight path."

[Siyar A'laam an-Nubula (19/340]

At the end of his life, al-Ghazzali (rahimahullah) returned to the belief of Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah. He focused on the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and condemned Ilmul-Kalaam and its proponents. He advised the Ummah to come back to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger ﷺ, and to act in accordance with them as was the way of the Sahabah.

Shaikhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah) said,

"After that he (al-Ghazzali) came back to the path of the scholars of hadeeth and wrote Iljaam al-Awwaam an Ilm al-Kalaam." [Majmoo (4/72)]

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A glance at 'I*ljaam al-Awwaam an Ilm al-Kalaam*' will prove to us that al-Ghazzali had indeed changed in many ways:

1. In this book he advocated the belief of the salaf and pointed out that the way of the salaf was the truth, and that whoever went against them was an innovator or follower of bidah.

2. He emphatically denounced ta'weel (interpretation of the Attributes of Allah in a manner that differs from their apparent meaning). He advocated affirming the Attributes of Allah and not misinterpreting them in a manner that would lead to denying the attributes of Allah.

3. He emphatically denounced the scholars of Ilmul-Kalaam and described all their principles and standards as reprehensible innovations, which had harmed a great number of people and created trouble for the Muslims. Al-Ghazzali said, "The harm caused to a great number of people is something that has been seen, witnessed and experienced. The evil that has resulted since Ilmul-Kalaam began has become widespread, even though people at the time of the Sahabah forbade that.

   This is also indicated by the fact that the Messenger ﷺ and the Sahabah, by consensus, did not follow the way of the scholars of Ilmul-Kalaam when they produced arguments, evidence and analysis. That was not because they were incapable of doing so. If they had thought that it was something good, they would have done it in the best manner, and they would have studied the matter hard, more than they did with regard to the division of the estate among the heirs."

Courtesy islamqa.com

"The Sahabah ﷺ needed to prove the Prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ to the Jews and Christians, but they did not add anything to the evidence of the Qur'aan. They did not resort to arguments or lay down philosophical principles. That was because they knew that doing so would provoke trouble and cause confusion.

Whoever is not convinced by the evidence of the Qur'aan will not be convinced by anything other than that, for there is no proof after the proof of Allah."

See Abu Haamid al-Ghazzaali wa'l-Tasawwuf.

The Aqlaniyyah (rationalists) school of thought

The Aqlaniyyah school of thought are a contemporary group inspired by the Mu'tazilah of old, and were initiated by Jamaal ad-Deen ibn Safdar al-Husaini al-Afghani, who was an Iranian with a Shiite upbringing. Al-Afghani's thoughts were forwarded by his Egyptian student, Muhammed Abduh, who was appointed an official mufti in 1899. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan from the Indian sub-continent also belonged to this trend.

These trends emerged towards the end of the colonial era, along with other movements that sought to give a solution to the major problems facing the Muslim Ummah at that time that included rampant superstitions and grave-worship, intellectual stagnation, the people's distance from the Qur'aan and Hadeeth, blind dependence on deviant clerics for religious guidance, social and political evils, scientific and economical backwardness.

The Aqlaniyyah trend proposed its solutions, and in general, stood up for some praiseworthy issues like opposing blind-following of madhhabs, turning back to the Qur'aan as a relevant guide for modern times, reaffirming the importance of Ijtihad, opposing widespread superstition and grave-worship, calling upon the Ummah to benefit from scientific progress and education.

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Some of them even referred to previous writings upon the way of the Salaf, like those of Ibn Taymiyah and Ibn al-Qayyim, when they could find in them support for their views, because Ibn Taymiyah's era has witnessed the very same problems - only that during the colonial era, Muslims were totally destitute of political and economical strength.

However, Mu'tazili views overwhelmed the Aqlaniyyah, and their modernist interpretations lead them to spread dangerous deviations in the Ummah, amongst which were:

a) Giving precedence to Aql over Naql

b) Re-interpretation of the verses and texts in accordance with latest scientific discoveries

c) Rejection of Ahadeeth that cannot be given a modernist interpretation, even those that are mutawathir or recorded in the two saheehs.

d) Defaming the Sahabah and the taba'een, especially the narrators of Hadeeth

e) Denying various issues of Ghayb like the angels, jinn, magic, etc.

f) Calling towards wahdatul-adyaan (unity of religions)

g) Dividing the Sunnah into Sunnah Amaliya and Sunnah Ghair Amalia (explanation ahead),

h) Calling towards nationalism

I) Raising objections on issues like hijaab, polygamy, etc.

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The Modernist Movement

Those who studied with or were influenced by the Aqlaniyyah further deviated and developed into that which shows a stark resemblance to the modernist movement in Christianity and Judaism. As a matter of fact, European modernist movements continue to provide much inspiration to their 'Muslim' counterparts, and therefore understanding the western-modernist helps us understand the objectives of those who seek to modernize Islamic teachings and values.

The modernist movement has its origins in medieval Europe, whose basic view is that the religion should change according to circumstance. They believed that most dogmas or teachings of the Church were novelties which arose because of specific historical circumstances throughout the history of the Church. They saw the Church to be mere human institution, and as such, not the absolute truth.

Modernism initiated a rationalist approach to the Bible that took a skeptical view of miracles and the historicity of biblical narratives. This approach attempted to evaluate the meaning of the Bible by focusing on the text alone and ignoring what the Church fathers had historically taught about it. This way of looking at the

Bible became quite popular in the Protestant churches and found its way into Catholic churches. It was an offshoot of the concept of 'sola scriptura' which asserts that Bible is God's written word that is self-authenticating, clear (perspicuous) to the rational reader. The Bible is its own interpreter (scripture interprets Scripture), and sufficient of itself to be the final authority of Christian doctrine.

The excesses of the Christian church in Medieval Europe and the view that the Church was a hurdle to social, scientific and cultural progress gave strength to the idea of the separation of the Church and the State - giving rise to secularism.

Modern European philosophers played an important role in forwarding Modernism, by using philosophy to integrate the Christian and Jewish scriptures with secular learning. Collectively these trends were seen as 'progressive thinking,' and it was forcefully argued that religion must be primarily caused and centered on the feelings of believers.

In 1864, Pope Pius IX issued a document called, 'The Syllabus of Errors' that condemned the ideas that human reason is the sole arbiter of truth and falsehood; and rejected calls that the Pope reconcile himself, and come to terms with progress, liberalism and modern civilization.

This document was largely ignored because the trend of injecting secular values and to 'fit in' with the times was firmly established; and rather than be a source of correction, it itself had to be re-interpreted by Catholic apologetics.

The evolution of ideas, similar to the Christian dogma of 'sola

fide' (being saved by faith alone), became a justification for constantly updating or rather downgrading the standards of morality. The doctrine of sola fide asserts that it solely is on the basis of the believer's faith that their transgressions of God's Law are forgiven.

As moral standards shifted heavily during the 20th century, previously a Catholic would have had to deny his faith to engage in some of the actions of his contemporaries. Now 'citing that dogmas can change', it was possible to 'update' Catholic morality while not being concerned with possible contradictions.

Modernist, neo-philosophers and secularists have succeeded in changing the face of Christianity to its very core. They have forced it to give into unlimited concessions, until even the most scandalous heretical action or statement is ignored. Everything seems to be permitted for everyone until there remains little to distinguish between a Christian and a secular humanist.

The Modernist call to transform Islam

Allah's Messenger ﷺ informed us that groups of his Ummah would follow the deviations of the past generation. He ﷺ said, "You will certainly follow the ways of those who came before you, span by span, cubit by cubit, until even if they were to enter a lizard's hole, you would follow them."
We (the Sahabah) said, "O Messenger of Allah, (do you mean) the Jews and Christians?"
He said, "Who else?!" [Agreed upon]

This Hadeeth describes with precision, the attitude and end-result of the 'Muslim-modernists' who imitated their Christian counterparts until they followed them into the hole of deviation and disbelief.

The following issues are the hallmarks of the modernist;

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1. According to the Modernists, thinking and values of a society are closely related to its environment and historic circumstances, and it is necessary to adapt and adjust the religion to the requirements and necessities of the times. Thus archaic interpretations and understandings must be altered to suit modern society. They argue that the people at the time of the Prophet did what they believed suited them the best, and the people today must act as is suitable to modern times.

For example, with regards to the hadeeth, "No people will ever prosper who place a woman in authority over them." [Saheeh al-Bukharee]

Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi says,

> "This is limited to the era of Messenger ﷺ, when the rule was for the men with absoluteness, but not now!!'
>
> [Nadwa fi Qanaat bi-Taarikh 4/7/1418H]

Muhammad Abduh writes concerning the issue of the permissible number of wives for a man,

> "It is required from the ulama to revise this issue... the Deen was revealed for the welfare of the people and their good and its basis is to prevent harm and destruction. So if there is something causing corruption at an age that was not such previously, then without doubt the ruling should be changed and modified in accordance with the present."
>
> [Tafseer al-Manar (4/349-350)]

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It is sufficient reply that Islam is a complete religion and during the Prophet's last sermon, Allah revealed concerning this last and final Deen, "This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My Favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion..." [Soorah al-Maida (5): 3]

The meaning of this verse is that until the end of time, people will neither need a new sharee'ah, nor a new set of rules to govern their lives, and the sharee'ah of Prophet ﷺ is sufficient for them. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "I have not omitted anything that will bring you closer to Paradise but I have enjoined it upon you; and there is nothing that will keep you away from Hell but I have commanded you to do it." [Sunan Ibn Majah]

The fundamental evils that cause harm to the social, economical and spiritual well-being of the people like greed, miserliness, jealousy, hatred, injustice, being inconsiderate, lust, dishonesty, etc. are the same today as they were at the time of the Prophet. When one reads the stories of the previous nations in the Qur'aan and reasons why they prospered or went astray, we see them to be very much relevant to contemporary times for example; the story about the evil of homosexuality that afflicted the people of Prophet Lut عليه السلام.

2. "The modernists consider the present time to be more advanced than that of the Prophet ﷺ and they call for the renewal of the Deen claiming advancement of the society."

(**) However, their objective is not to benefit from advances in science or to prepare the society for the future but they seek to transform religious teachings in accordance with modern culture with the help of philosophy.

Hasan at-Turabi says,

"We have to revise our principles of Islamic fiqh, and in my view, a fresh sound review of the principle of fiqh begins with the Qur'aan. It seems like we need a new tafseer (interpretation of the Qur'an) - if you were to read the tafaseer that are circulated amongst us, you will find them to be bound with the incidents that occurred at the time when the tafseer was formulated. Every tafseer expresses the intellect of its time except the present time. We barely find a satisfying contemporary tafseer."

[Tajdeed al-Fikr al-Islami p. 25-26. Quoted from Asraniyoon - 219]

'The modernists fail to realize that Islamically, an advanced society is not the one with more material progress but rather the one that shows the most obedience to the commands of Allah and has a better understanding of the Deen.'(**) This is why in matters of the Deen, the later generations have to refer back to the understanding of the first generations of Islam, who were much more advanced and pure in their religious understanding.

3. In order to make the Qur'aan subservient to modern values, the modernists needed to interpret the Qur'aanic injunctions independently without any hindrance or intervention of the Sunnah or the sayings of the Salaf that determine and explain the true meaning and intent of the verses. Thus the Mu'tazili argument of Aql over Naql had to be applied, and presented as the majority view.

** Modernism in Islam by Jamaal Zarabozo

Muhammad Abduh alleged that the Islamic nation has agreed,

> "except for a very few who can be ignored that if Aql contradicts Naql, then what is proven by Aql has to be taken." [Quoted from al-Islam wan-Nasraniyah (p. 56)]

Muhammad Abduh's statement holds good only if he is referring to the Mu'tazilah, the Ash'ariyah and their ilk. But as for Ahlus-Sunnah, they do not give precedence to Aql over the sayings of the Messenger ﷺ as is known from the Imams of Deen like Imam Malik, Shafa'ee, Ahmad, Ishaaq ibn Rahwiya, Sufyan ath-Thawreee, ibnul-Mubarak, ibn Uyaynah, ad-Darimee and others. Far from 'Aql over Naql' being the majority view, it is a heretical principle rejected overwhelmingly.

For the modernist however, this heretical principle is so essential that Fahmi Huwaidi (considered an 'Islamist' journalist) considers following the Naql (texts of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah) to be idol-worship, he says,

> "idol-worship is not merely worship of the idols, rather idol-worship in today's time has been represented by... worship of the texts..."
>
> [Majallah (no. 235) 1978, quoted from al-Asraniyoon p. 178]

4. Modernists claim that the Qur'aan can only be a relevant source of guidance as long as it can be interpreted independently in the present, and thus they reject the Sunnah as an explainer of the Qur'aan and an independent source of Islamic teaching, especially in matters of Aqeedah.

Muhammad Abduh writes,

> "Anyway, it is required from us to dust off the commands in the hadeeth and not let it direct our Aqeedah, we take what is in the texts of the Qur'aan and what is in accordance with the Aql." [Tafseer Juz Amma, p.186]

The modernists have made Aql their judge to determine which hadeeth are acceptable, preferring those with general principles over the ones with specific meaning. Concerning the hadeeth, "There is none born among the off-spring of Adam, but Shaytan touches it. A child therefore, cries loudly at the time of birth because of the touch of Shaytan, except Maryam and her child." [Saheeh al-Bukharee (641)]

Zamakhshari remarks,

> "Allah alone knows the authenticity of this, for if this was true, then it would mean that Shaytan craves to seduce every new-born except Maryam and her son; so they are both masoom (free from sin), and similarly whosoever fits their description... The beginning of the cry from the touch is a representation of his craving... The reality of the touch is not as people think. No. If Shaytan was to control people then the world would have been full of cries..." [Tafseer al-Kashshaf (1/385-386)]

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The modernists do not accept Ahaad Ahadeeth in matters of Aqeedah.

Muhammad al-Ghazali as-Saka argues,

> "Verily, beliefs, its basis is pure certainty that does not have a speck of doubt. Moreover, the beliefs of Islam are based upon mutawathir texts and established Aql. We do not base our Aqeedah upon khabar wahid (i.e., Ahaad Ahadeeth) or guessing thoughts."
>
> [As-Sunnah an-Nabawiya bayna ahlul-fiqah wa ahlul-hadeeth p.66. Quoted from al-Asraniyoon, p288]

Muhammad Abduhu also writes,

> "About the hadeeth which speak about Maryam and Eesa that the Shaytan does not touch them, and the hadeeth which speaks about the Shaytan of Allah's Messenger ﷺ accepting Islam, and the removal of the share of Shaytan from his ﷺ heart - these are from Dhanni (unsure) reports because they are from Ahaad hadeeth which speak about the world of the unseen, and Eeman in the unseen comes under Aqeedah, and nothing that is dhanni can be accepted concerning it... We are not responsible to have faith in information from those Ahadeeth in our Aqeedah."
>
> [Tafseer al-Manar (3/292)]

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5. The Modernists divide the Sunnah into 'Sunnah Tashree'eah' and 'Ghair Tashree'eah.' They consider basic Aqeedah, Salaat, Zakaat, Hajj and other worships as Sunnah Tashree'eah. But Ahadeeth that speak about general public affairs and rules and regulations are according to them, 'Ghair Tashree'eah' which does not have to be implemented necessarily. This explains their aversion in taking judgment from the Sunnah.

Muhammad Abduh said,

> "What falls under the Sunnah from the issues of politics are worldly issues and not Deen. It was so even during the time of the Prophet and thus it is subject to shoora (consultation) and rai (opinion) and ijtihad (and therefore can be), accepted, rejected, modified and made additions to." [Al-Islam was-Sultan ad-Diniya (104)]

Muhammad Abduh says about the prohibition of women ruler-ship,

> "What we have in our heritage about the issue of the ruler-ship of women is an Islamic thought and Fiqhi opinion and Fiqhi Ijtihad and it is not from Allah..."

About the Hadeeth of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, "No people will ever prosper who place a woman in authority over them."
Abduh says,

> "It is a political prophecy from the Messenger about the failure of the Majoos - they were the ones who were ruled by a woman. It is not a command of prohibition for the leadership of women, neither general nor specific. It was an exceptional case..." [Al-Islam wal-Mustaqbil, 282, 232]

Thus, we have seen how the Modernists try to force their interpretation onto the text, just like the Mu'tazilah concerning whom

Shaikhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyah writes,

> "Such people have made Rai their basic beliefs and then present the words of the Qur'aan on it (take, reject and make interpretation based upon it), - they have no predecessors (in this act/methodology) from the Sahabah and the Taba'een, nor from the Imams of the Muslims; neither in their views or their tafseer..." [Majmoo al-Fatawa (13/358)]

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6. An element of the Modernists express opinions that support Wahdat al-Adyaan (unity of religions).

Jamaal al-Deen al-Afghani said,

> "The three religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) are overall in agreement in ideology and aims, so if there is a shortcoming in one in its ruling concerning the absolute good, then it should be completed with the other... In this, I see a great hope that the three religions can be united, just like they are united in their essence, foundation and objective, and with this unison, humanity will move towards peace - a big step in this short life." [al-A'maal al-Kamila by Jamaal ad-Deen al-Afghani, collected by Muhammad Ammarah, p.294-5]

Muhammad Ammarah says,

> "The differences between the Muslims and the People of the book is not dangerous. When they go out of the pale of eeman, they are guided by (another) deen of the lord." [Tajdeed al-Fikr Islami,82. Quoted from al-asraniyoon, 309]

Yusuf al-Qaradawi says about the Christians,

> "Every issue among us is similar, we are children of the same homeland, our fate is same, our Ummah is same, I say about them our brother Christians, some may object to my calling them brother (for, only mu'mineen [believers] are brothers), yes we are mumin and they are mu'min (only) in a different way."

[The program as-Sharee'ah wal-Hayat 12/10/1997,
and he confesses this in his books like fatawa mu'asirah (2/668)]

Shaikh Bakr Abu Zaid (rahimahulah) writes refuting *Wahdat al-Adyaan*, "the call of uniting Islam (the religion which came to cancel out all the previous religion) with that which the Jews and Christians are upon (religions that are marred with additions and modification) is the greatest deceit that has challenged Islam - united upon it are both, the Jews and the Christians due to their mutual hatred for Islam and the Muslims, and they have covered it with polished slogans and it is a deception that holds frightening fate.

Its ruling in Islam is that it is a call of Bidah, misguidance that leads to Kufr (disbelief), Riddah (apostasy) from Islam, because it ruins the Aqeedah, falsifies the truthfulness of the Qur'aan, and the Qur'aan's being the Naskh (something that cancels out the previous revealed books), and falsifying the Naskh of Islam for the previous legislations, falsifies the fact that Prophet ﷺ is the seal of the Prophets - So it is a theory that is rejected in Sharee'ah."

[Ibtaal li-Nadhariyah al-Khalt bayna al-Islam wa-gairihi minal-Adyan by Sheikh Bakr Abu Zaid]

7. Another sect that is part of the Modernist trend is the 'Hadeeth-Rejectors'. While the disease of abandoning hadeeth is found amongst all modernists to varying degrees, hadeeth-rejectors have gone further in their blanket rejection of either all or most hadeeth, which is why they innovate ideas even stranger to Islam to the extent that they seek to re-interpret even basic worship like salaat and siyaam. [Detailed discussion in the next section]

8. 'Neo-Modernists' or Progressives. They are the new wave of westernized-individuals claiming to be 'Muslim reformers', with a singular message to re-define Islam in a manner that suits the sensitivities of Western culture and values.

Amongst them are U.S. or European based academics, journalists, self-styled activists, and others - all enticed by the lucrative opportunities arisen out of the media's voracious appetite for apologetic muslims speaking about 'problems within Islam.'

Some of these individuals are not even from Muslim backgrounds like those who are Ismailis or Qadianis; or others who are soofi charlatans, raafidah, Iranian communists, Egyptian modernists, or other non-practicing secular individuals with rudimentary knowledge of Islam.

Together they form a political movement dubbed 'Progressive Muslims' that has no consistent aims or agenda apart from making statements that are opposed to Islam or Muslim interests, like having a women lead a mixed gathering of men and women for a Friday khutbah at a church, to invite a Christian pastor to give the Friday khutbah, to express support for homosexual marriages, to support the banning of niqaab and to throwing accusations against Islamic charities and organizations.

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The 'progressives' for most part find academic direction from the misguidance of the Mu'tazilah and the Mulhid philosophers, and show very little intellectual integrity and sincerity as will be apparent from the following incident.

The Female-Imam Fiasco

In March 2005, US-based 'progressives' arranged for Amina Wadud, a feminist, to give the Friday khutbah and lead the prayers in a church to a mixed gathering of men and women.

The justification was a weak narration about a woman called 'Umm Waraqah' who was allowed to lead the prayers for her household. They used this weak narration despite the well-known fact that in Islam only men are allowed to lead the prayers and the prayer-rows of women are behind that of men. What is amazing is that 'progressives' reject most or all hadeeth as a source of legislation.

It turned out that Amina Wadud does not even believe in parts of the Qur'aan. A month before the 'church event', another 'progressive' Tarek Fatah reported the following about Amina Wadud's lecture in Toronto.

> "Midway through her speech ... (Wadud) stated that despite the fact the Qur'aan explicitly asks for cutting off the hands of thieves, she did not agree with the Qur'aan...
>
> She maintained that as a Muslim with Allah close to her heart, in all honesty she could not continue with the hypocrisy of lying about how she felt about some verses of the Qur'aan...
>
> She declared that she could not intellectually or spiritually accept some things in the Qur'aan, for example some of the hudud punishments like the cutting of hands or the permission to beat one's wife."

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Inna'lillahi wa inna ilaihe raji'oon such words do not come out except from a disbeliever or a hypocrite. We see that the 'progressives' neither have true faith in Allah's revelation or His Wisdom, nor do they have the intellectual integrity or truthfulness to stick by their own principles. They follow what they like however frail and they reject what they dislike however well established! When it suits them, they seek to act upon a weak narration despite all odds; and when it does not, they reject the entire collection of Bukharee and Muslim - even parts of the Qur'aan!

Deen based on feelings

The 'progressives' show an attitude that closely resembles that of the Christian-modernist i.e., giving more credence to people's feelings than to the revealed texts. This is why one often finds them speaking of the 'spirit of Islam' in order to avoid following the specific teachings of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah.

For example, they argue that text of the Qur'aan only says for women to dress modestly and they do not like to talk about the specific details of hijaab and say we only need to follow the 'spirit' of the law. Naturally, the Modernist/Progressives find satisfaction with the Murjiah view that faith is belief in the heart only, and actions of the limbs are not part of faith i.e. 'progressive sola fide'!!! The neo-progressives have gone even further to define an atheist with cultural or social affinities to Muslims as 'Muslims'.

Disputing about agreed upon matters

When an issue has been agreed upon by consensus amongst the previous generations, then peculiar opinions of those who come later do not break this consensus and do not make this issue a

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disputed one. However, the 'progressives' promote strange/heretical opinions in order to term agreed upon matters as disputed; then insist upon following the peculiar opinion over the traditional view. They seek after and promote strange and mistaken opinions of past scholars, or accept the views of outright deviants and heretics when it suites them.

As is evident, the 'progressives' mimic closely the Christian-modernist idea that scriptural guidelines are relative truth and not absolute. What they overlook is that unlike Christianity, Islamic texts as well as their preliminary interpretation by the Prophet ﷺ and his companions are preserved and available today such that one can refer back to them in order to determine the original state of affairs, and distinguish between what are religious injunctions and what are cultural practices.

The 'progressives' seek to make Islam more humane by removing practices from it that are not part of Islam in the first place, like forced marriages and honor killings. By this, they have exposed their ignorance and prejudice towards Islam to be on par with that of the western media that they cater to.

The 'progressives' may be ardent claimants to independent thinking, but in reality it is nothing but the age-old disease of philosophy in a new garb. Hence we find them seeking guidance from the works of Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd. They also have extremely distorted views about the concept of 'Ijtihaad' and when Islamic scholars resort to Ijtihad to deduce rulings.

The True Meaning of Ijtihad v/s the false understanding of the Progressives

It must be understood that the vast majority of the beliefs and practices that are an essential part of a Muslim's life are clearly stated in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah and are agreed upon by consensus since the early generations of Muslims. These established beliefs and practices are not open to change or reinterpretation.

In a small minority of finer issues where there is no direct reference in the texts, qualified Islamic scholars derive the ruling by means of Ijtihaad (i.e., deliberating upon a ruling in light of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah). The 'progressives' however have taken 'Ijtihaad' as a panacea by which they seek to change what they wish from Islam at will even when those issues are plainly mentioned in the Book and the Sunnah.

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The following quote from one of the 'progressives' Muqtedar Khan summarizes what the progressive movement is about and its means in achieving its goals:

"The second view (on Ijtihad) often espoused by non-jurists and particularly by those who advocate some form of Islamic modernism and liberalism, envisions ijtihad more broadly.

For modernist Muslims...Ijtihad is about freedom of thought, rational thinking and the quest for truth through an epistemology covering science, rationalism, human experience, critical thinking and so on.

When modernist Muslims claim that the door of ijtihad has been closed, they are lamenting the loss of the spirit of inquiry that was so spectacularly demonstrated by classical Islamic civilization at its peak. They are, in a sense, nostalgic for Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), for al-Farabi, al-Biruni and al-Haytham -- scientists, philosophers and jurists of Islam's 'Golden Age'.

...As long as a majority of Muslims equate Islam with sharee'ah, Islamic scholarship with fiqh (jurisprudence) and real knowledge with juristic knowledge, ijtihad will remain a limited jurisprudential tool and closed minds will never open... Muslims must go back and read Ibn Rushd (Fasl al-Maqaal, The Decisive Treatise), and learn how he bridged science and religion, in order to

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understand that Islam has nothing to fear from reason and so to open their hearts and minds to rational thought... Islamic reformation can be understood in two different ways. It can mean the reform of society to bring it back to what have been considered Islamic norms and values: most Islamic and Islamist reformers are pursuing this type of reform. The other reform strategy is to question the existing understanding of Islam and seek to articulate a reformed understanding of Islam: this is where Islamic modernists and rationalists have always plied their trade. Here, Ijtihad is employed as an instrument to critique prevalent understanding and articulate a more compassionate, more modern and perhaps even a more liberal understanding."

[Two Theories of Ijtihad]

Comments:

As we can see...

(i) Ijtihad is falsely given a definition similar to philosophy - "quest for truth through... rationalism, human experience, critical thinking."

(ii) Muslims are asked to follow the deviant ways of the philosophers that confused and misguided even someone as pious and knowledgeable as Imam Al-Ghazzali.

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(iii) Islam should not be equated with sharee'ah (the teachings of Islam as a way of life)... and this begets the question, What should Islam, the way of life based upon revelation to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ be equated with?

(iv) Reformation is to "question the existing understanding of Islam" and make it "a more compassionate, more modern, more liberal."

Subhaan'Allah! Islam is after all, the Command of the Most Compassionate revealed 1400 years back to liberate mankind from the worship of the creation to the worship of the Creator.

A Movement in Disarray

Presently (2008), the Progressive movement is in complete disarray and its main organization in the US has lost over 90% of its board members. It has lost support of most of the people that it claims to represent, primarily because the 'progressives' have nothing to offer the people beyond expressing disdain and aversion for the Islamic sharee'ah. The Muslims find the 'progressives' on the other side when their interests are discussed.

For example, when Allah's Messenger ﷺ was unjustly ridiculed by the Danish cartoonists, the progressives were found justifying them and blaming Muslim reaction. When Muslims in Canada sought to refer to Islamic law to solve marital and inheritance disputes, the progressives strongly opposed it blaming the sharee'ah to be 'unfair to women'.

Initially the Progressives did find common ground with extremist soofis, raafidah, ismailis and other groups that share the 'progressives' disdain for the Islamic sharee'ah, and who too base their religion upon feelings rather than the text - but later relations soured between them over political differences and group rivalry.

The figureheads of the 'progressives' fiercely compete with each other in issuing anti-Islamic statements, and often accuse each

other of being too-Muslim. Their internal bickering provides useful insights on the movement and its attitude towards Islamic teachings.

For instance, Muqtedar Khan, despite his lewd attitude towards Islamic teachings and his far-fetched ideas on Ijtihaad, was forced to resign from the advisory board of the primary 'progressive' organization.

He says in his resignation letter,

> "Lately I have found the environment with Progressive Muslims Union (PMU) extremely oppressive, abusive and hateful. I have found both PMU and *** extremely intolerant of difference and disagreement. This is the only Muslim group where people who believe in the teachings of the Quran are ridiculed and those who express ambivalence about it even about the existence of God are celebrated…
>
> My close interaction with PMU has taught me three things, (1) that clearly I am not sufficiently indifferent to the teachings of Quran and the traditions of the Islamic heritage to be a "good Progressive Muslim" (2) I was too gullible to believe in its empty claims of openness and tolerance for different perspectives and (3) I have also learned that I am completely opposite in nature to most of the members of PMU. For example I believe that a rational argument precedes the moral judgment.
>
> PMU is operating with a set of moral principles randomly acquired from Marxism and/or postmodern cultural trends and is treating them as absolutely moral truths, and are now looking for arguments [hopefully with some Islamic content] to justify them. PMU members unleash fanatical rage when this is questioned and resort to

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abuse, distortion, false accusations as a substitute to argument.

I can understand, sympathize and participate in exercises of Ijtihad that seek to reassess "human understanding" of Islam. I have been advocating this for over a decade. My website Ijtihad was launched in 1999. But not to observe Islamic values after recognizing them as such to me is a sin. I cannot for example in good conscience approve of alcohol consumption by those who acknowledge it as forbidden. To demand that I do so in order to remain a member of the community is exactly the kind of oppression that I thought we had come together to fight..."

We Conclude with the wise words of,

Imam al-Barbaharee:

"If you wish to be firm upon the truth and upon the way of the Ahlus-Sunnah before you; beware of theological rhetoric (Kalaam) and of disputation, arguing, analogy and debating about the religion. Listening to them, even if you do not accept from them, throws doubts into the heart.

This is sufficient for you to be destroyed. There has never been any heresy, innovation, innovated sect or misguidance except through rhetoric, disputation, argumentation and analogy. These are the gates of innovation, doubt and heresy.'

[End quote from, 'Explanation of the Creed' by Imam al-Barbaharee]

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Munkareen al-Hadeeth
(the Hadeeth-Rejecters)

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Allah says in the Qur'aan,

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ
لَا تُقَدِّمُواْ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦۖ
وَٱتَّقُواْ ٱللَّهَۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

"O you who believe!
Do not put (yourselves) forward
before Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and fear Allah.
Verily! Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."
[Soorah al-Hujurat (49): 1]

Ibn Abbas (radiallahuanhuma) the great Qur'aanic commentator - explained this verse in a manner that shows its relevance to all generations that came after the time of the Messengers ﷺ. He said that by not putting oneself forward it is meant, "Do not say anything that contradicts the Qur'aan and Sunnah."

Along these lines, we understand the next verse of this soorah, "O you who believe! Raise not your voices above the voice of the Prophet (ﷺ), nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds may be rendered fruitless while you perceive not." [Soorah al-Hujurat (49): 1]

To us, the forbiddance of raising our voices over that of the Prophet signifies not forwarding opinions and arguments in the presence of the Messenger's ﷺ teachings.

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most significantly refraining from any unauthorized and unfounded interpretations of the Qur'aan that are based on opinion. This while we have with us explanations from the Prophet ﷺ, the one assigned by Allah to convey and explain His Message. "And We have also sent down unto you (O Muhammad ﷺ) the Reminder and Advice, that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them." [Soorah an-Nahl (16):44]

And undoubtedly, Allah's Messenger fulfilled this responsibility of his in a manner that anyone who turns away from this guidance has none to blame but himself. He ﷺ said, "...I should not like to see anyone amongst you on the Day of Resurrection, carrying over his neck a horse that will be bleating or carrying over his neck a horse that will be neighing, Such a man will be saying, "O Allah's Messenger ﷺ, Intercede with Allah for me!" and I will reply, "I can't help you, for I have conveyed Allah's Message to you."

The severe caution against raising voices in the Messenger's presence was given at a time when any defiance to his teachings was inconceivable. It is narrated that after the revelation of these verses from Soorah al-Hujurat about raising voices in the Messenger's presence, Umar spoke so softly that the Prophet ﷺ had to ask him to repeat himself in order to be understood. [See, Tafseer Ibn Katheer]

Similarly Anas bin Malik narrated, "When this Ayah (49:2) was revealed, Thabit bin Qays whose voice was (naturally) loud said, 'I was the one who raised his voice above the voice of Allah's Messenger. I am among the dwellers of the Fire. My good deeds have been done in vain." He remained in his house feeling distressed until the Messenger of Allah noticed his absence. When Thabit's apprehension

was conveyed to the Prophet ﷺ, he said, "Nay, he (Thabit) is among the dwellers of Paradise."

These incidents bear witness to the Sahabah's understanding and awareness of the Prophet's elevated status that voices raised, not at but in the presence of the Messenger ﷺ caused such fear in their hearts.

The Sahabah would never oppose the Messenger or contradict him or voice their opinion or shed doubt or express anything less than complete submission to the Prophet's orders. It was in this backdrop that Allah's Messenger ﷺ warned against that which was unthinkable to his faithful companions. He ﷺ said, "Does any of you, while reclining on his couch, imagine that Allah has prohibited only that which is to be found in this Qur'aan? By Allah, I have preached, commanded and prohibited various matters as numerous as that are found in the Qur'aan or more." [Abu Dawood (3044)]

He ﷺ informed, "Indeed, I have brought the Qur'aan and something like it along with it, yet the time is coming when a man reclining on his couch will say, 'Keep to this Qur'aan, what you find in it to be permissible (Halaal), treat as permissible, and what you find in it to be prohibited (Halaal), treat as prohibited..." [Abu Dawood]

The Misguidance of Rejecting Hadeeth

The prophecy of Allah's Messenger ﷺ materialized when a dangerous precedence was set after the era of the righteous Salaf. Ahlul-Kalaam as well as some scholars of Fiqh and Usool deduced certain rules and in their extremism subjected the hadeeth to these rules such that if the hadeeth were in accordance with these rules, they were accepted; and if they were contrary to these rules, the Ahadeeth were not followed. So they effectively reversed the affair, and the hadeeth becomes subject to these deduced rules, instead of it being the judge and criterion. [See, The Hadeeth is Proof in itself by Shaikh al-Albani] Rules for example: 'matters of Aqeedah are not taken from Aahad hadeeth' and 'hadeeth that add a rule to the Qur'aan are not accepted!'

Those who followed this misguided way built upon it until certain groups rejected Hadeeth outright and questioned its authority. Their motivations were the same as the Ahlul-Kalaam before them i.e., to sideline the hadeeth and clear the path for opinions, philosophies and conjecture in the Deen.

Hadeeth-rejecters come in different orientations...

1. Some reject Hadeeth bluntly like Rashad Khaleefah. (*1)
2. Some do not reject Ahadeeth outright but reduce its status to mere tradition and fables, and only approve Ahadeeth that they see as consistent to their understanding of the Qur'aan like Ghulam Parvez.(*2)

(*1) Rashad Khaleefah was an Egyptian immigrant to the U. S. who claimed to have discovered a mathematical pattern involving 'the number 19' and its multiples throughout the Qur'aan. He claimed this discovery was a miracle that comes from Messengers, and he declared Messengership on this basis.

His infatuation with the number 19 led him to reject two verses from the Qur'aan that did not fit his calculation (i.e. verses 9:128-129).

He claimed that the Prophet ﷺ had no function except to deliver the Qur'aan and so, he did not explain or interpret it.

Rashad Khaleefah rejected hadeeth outright, and declared anyone who testifies to '*Muhammad-ar-RasoolAllah*' in the Kalimah as a mushrik.

As for the integrity of Rashad Khalifa's number 19 research, Dr Bilal Philips mentions, "Many Muslims at first received Khalifa's theories with uncritical enthusiasm. However, when more rigorous critics began checking his numbers, they found numerous discrepancies and some outright fabrica-tions in his data.

His claims were based on the number of times a given letter or word occurs in a given soorah or group of soorahs. It was discovered that he would sometimes treat hamzahs like alifs and sometimes he wouldn't, depending on the totals he needed in a given soorah to confirm his theory. Sometimes he counted letters that weren't there, sometimes he failed to count existing letters, sometimes he counted two words as one, sometimes he added to the Qur'aanic text and sometimes he deleted from it, all for the purpose of making the letter and word counts conform to his theory." [For more details see the book, "The Quran's Numerical Miracle: Hoax and Heresy" by Dr. Bilal Philips]

(*2) Gulam Parvez was a government civil servant in pre-partition India, and later worked in the Pakistan Central Government. He was the founder of the Tolu-e-Islam Trust and authored many books to forward his ideas of hadeeth rejection.

3. Some shed doubt on the authenticity of the entire collection of hadeeth whose usefulness - as they claim - is of secondary dependant nature like Amin Ahsan Islaahi.(*3)

(*3) Amin Ahsan Islahi was a journalist born in Azamgarh. He took Hamiduddin Farahi's idea of direct deliberation on the Qur'aan and was amongst the founding members of the Moulana Maudoodi's, "Jamaat Islami."

Maudoodi himself, like Islahi had dubious views with regards to hadith, and both he and Islahi spread doubts and suspicions on the verification of hadith. Many specialized scholars have pointed out the incorrect views of Maududi on the Hadith and Sunnah, most notably the great scholar Muhammad Ismaa'eel al-Salafi (may Allaah have mercy on him) (d. 1387 AH), who wrote an important study entitled Mawqif al-Jamaa'at al-Islamiyyah min al-Hadeeth al-Nabawi (attitude of the Jama'at-e-Islami towards the Prophet's hadeeth).

In Moulana Ismaa'eel al-Salafi analysis, "It is possible that Moulana Islahi's words and tone may be different, but as for the objective then Moulana Islahi's views are no different from that of Moulana Maududi. With regards to the hadith, both elders have almost the same views" [Hujjiyat Hadith, Shaikh Muhammed Ismail Gujranwala, p.87 (Jamaat Islami's Views on Hadith – a critcal analysis)]. More on this in the appendix.

Maudoodi mentioned a strange criterion for approving hadeeth. He said, "A person who understands the distinguishing character of Islam and has done a thorough study of Qur'aan and the character of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ becomes capable of sensing the finer sentiments of the character of the Messenger. His insight is able to sense which words his Holy Majesty the Messenger of Allah could have uttered in a certain hadith, while dishonoring others that he does not sense, belong to the Messenger." [Tafhimaat, vol.1/338, Islamic Publications Limited, Lahore 2000 CE]

Amin Islahi's way and teachings are being promoted by his media-savvy student, Jawed Ahmed Ghamidi who forwards false ideas like hijab has no foundation in Islam, Music is not haraam, it is completely legitimate for a female to be the head of an Islamic State, rejecting the bodily Meraaj of the Prophet, rejecting the punishment of Rajm (stoning), rejecting the descent of Eesa (alihis-salaam), rejecting the advent of the Mahdi and the appearance of the Dajjal, and many other issues. He is amongst the very few who publicly indorsed the Female-Imam fiasco that took place in the US.

Hallmarks
of the hadeeth-rejecters

Despite differences in approach, the Hadeeth-rejecters share the following common traits:

a) **They shed doubts on the validity of the process by which Ahadeeth are declared as authentic or fabricated.** According to them, it is either impossible to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic Hadeeth, or the science of Hadeeth cannot prove a narration to be authentic with certainty. Their uncertainty is a result of their ignorance or lack of correct appreciation for the science of hadeeth verification.

b) **They do not respect the unanimous agreements between the hadeeth-specialists of the past,** like the agreement on the authenticity of the Ahadeeth collected in Saheeh al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim concerning which Imam an-Nawawi (rahimahullah) said in his introduction to Sharh Muslim (1/14), "The scholars are agreed that the most sound of books after the Qur'aan are the two Saheehs of al-Bukharee and Muslim which were accepted by the Ummah. The book of al-Bukharee is sounder and the more beneficial of the two."

c) **They aggressively promote that the interpretation of the Qur'aan is not limited to the understanding of the earlier generations of Islam**, but that the Qur'aan should be open to interpretation in accordance with modern thought.

d) **They harbor ambitions to insinuate a new social and religious order for the Muslims which they justify by misinterpreting the Book of Allah.** They seek an 'Islamic renaissance' to change the way Muslims understand the Deen. Therefore, one often finds the names of Hadeeth-rejecters associated with heretical interpretations of well-accepted Islamic teachings.

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Callers to evil masquerading as reformers

Like all dangerous innovations and deviations from the Deen, the Fitna of hadeeth-rejection comes in a guise that appeals to the people's reverence for Allah's Deen. Some hadeeth-rejecters claim to be defenders of the Prophet's honor when they reject authentic hadeeth from Saheeh al-Bukharee that mentions the age of the Prophet's wife Aaisha at the time of the consummation of her marriage or the Hadeeth about Allah's Messenger being harmed by magic. They consider these Ahadeeth unacceptable and a cause for Islam's critics to attack the Messenger!

Their solution is to cast doubts on the very process of transmission and verification of hadeeth and deprive the Muslims from the entire treasure of knowledge inherited from the Prophet ﷺ

Their call takes strength from the general ignorance with regards to the process by which Ahadeeth are verified as authentic or inauthentic. **The irony of the matter is that the hadeeth-rejecters wish to defend the Prophet's honor by rendering meaningless his ﷺ status as an example, a teacher and explainer of the Qur'aan.**

Hadeeth-rejecters like Gulam Perwez consider themselves as vanguards of Islamic law against secularism. But what remains of Islamic law when you curtail the Sunnah from it and expose the Qur'aan to open misinterpretation until every opinionated person has his own personal interpretation of Quran.

In an environment of increased sectarianism, where religious groups openly squabble amongst themselves, Munkareen al-Hadeeth present themselves **as liberal, progressive consensus-makers** who wish to gather all the sects on the one agreed-upon book, 'the Qur'aan'.

The fact however, is that Munkareen al-Hadeeth are neither liberal nor progressive. They project themselves as liberal in the sense that they are not averse to divergent opinions. But a closer analysis shows that hadeeth-rejecters declare anyone who disagrees with their personal interpretations of the Qur'aan as misguided and disbelievers. (Examples to follow under, 'Are Hadeeth-Rejecters Liberal?')

As for being progressive, progress is to advance towards following the Deen of Allah, not changing it.

Finally, with regard to unifying the different sects under the banner of the Qur'aan, then these sects are already united on the text of the Qur'aan. It is the interpretation that there is disagreement about. And this is exactly the type of disagreement found amongst Munkireen al-Hadeeth themselves (examples ahead). There is thus no substance in this claim either.

As a result, the only thing that Munkireen al-hadeeth have managed to accomplish by spreading doubts about Islam's texts is to open the way for Islamic law to be attacked by its enemies and to

question beliefs and practices that have always been accepted by consensus.

This is why we find 'secularist', 'modernists', 'progressives' and anyone who has a vested interest in subduing Islam's influence as a legislation and law have jumped on the bandwagon of the hadeeth-rejecters for they find common cause with them. These groups now compete with Hadeeth-rejecters and concoct ever-weirder misinterpretations of Islam.

Authority and Significance of Sunnah in Islam

1. The Example of Allah's Messenger is part of Islam and will be protected till the Last Day. Allah says, "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad ﷺ) you have a good example to follow, for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much." [Soorah al-Ahzab (33): 21]

Islam is a universal religion, and its teachings are for all mankind and for all ages; and as long as people need to be guided, the example of the Prophet will be preserved. "We have not sent you (O Muhammad ﷺ) except as a Messenger to all mankind, giving them glad tidings and warning them against sin." [Soorah Saba (34): 28]

Rather, the very purpose of sending a human Messenger was for people to take him as an example in their day to day lives, "Say, 'If there were on the earth, angels walking about in peace and security, We should certainly have sent down for them from the heaven, an angel as a Messenger." [Soorah al-Isra (17): 95]

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2. **Allah's Messenger ﷺ received revelations beside the Qur'aan.** Allah says, "Verily, it is We who have sent down the Dhikr (revelation), and surely We will guard it." [Soorah Hijr (15):9]

Anyone who believes in Allah as the Supreme Rabb, must agree that the guidance which Allah has sent will be protected as long as there is a need for it which in case of Islam is until the last day. The question remains - Is Qur'aan the only guidance that has been revealed by Allah as the hadeeth-rejecters contend or has the Messenger ﷺ received revelation from Allah that is not part of the Qur'aan?

The Qur'aan itself refers to revelation being received from Allah that is not found in the Qur'aan and hereunder are few examples:

i) Allah says in the Qur'aan, "And We made the Qiblah (prayer direction towards Jerusalem) which you used to face, only to test those who followed the Messenger (Muhammad)." [Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 143]

This verse shows that Allah had assigned the previous Qiblah of the Muslims but there is no verse in the Qur'aan designating Jerusalem as the previous Qibla. This means that there has to be an alternative form of 'Wahy' (revelation) apart from the Qur'aan through which Allah revealed the previous command of facing towards Jerusalem.

ii) "And (remember) when the Prophet (ﷺ) disclosed a

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matter in confidence to one of his wives (Hafsah), so when she told it (to another i.e. Aa'isha), and Allah made it known to him, he informed part thereof and left a part. Then when he told her (Hafsah) thereof, she said, 'Who told you this?' He said, 'The All-Knower, the All-Aware (Allah) has told me." [Soorah at-Tahrim (66): 3]

The verse says, "Allah made it known to him," and yet, there is no verse in the Qur'aan that makes mentions this.

iii) "It is for Us to collect it (i.e. the Qur'aan) and to give you (O Muhammad ﷺ) the ability to recite it (the Qur'aan)." [Soorah al-Qiyamah (75): 17]

The Qur'aan as it has been collected is not in the same order in which it was revealed, and while it is for Allah to collect the Qur'aan there are no verses in the Qur'aan that mention the arrangement of the verses. This information is found in the Sunnah.

iv) The Qur'aan mentions the call to the prayer (adhan), "And when you proclaim the call for Salaat, they take it (but) as a mockery and fun." [Soorah al-Maidah (5): 58] and, "O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the Salaat on the day of Friday, come to the remembrance of Allah." [Soorah al-Jumuah (62): 9]

These verses testify that Adhan is part of the religion of Islam but there is no verse in the Qur'aan that prescribes the Adhan for the believers. This order is found in the other revelation - the Sunnah.

These are some proofs that show that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did indeed receive revelation apart from the Qur'aan; and since this revelation constitutes beneficial guidance, it will be preserved. [As-Sunnah Hujjiyyatuhaa wa Makaanatuha fi-l-Islam by Dr. Luqmaan as-Salafi; Introduction to the Sunnah by Dr. Suhaib Hassan]

3. The Sunnah is in itself a Revelation from Allah

Allah repeatedly makes mention of the revealed 'al-Hikmah' in the Qur'aan. He said, "Allah has sent down to you the Book (the Qur'aan), and al-Hikmah, and taught you that which you knew not." [Soorah an-Nisa (4): 113]

"He, it is Who, sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His Ayaat, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the Hikmah." [Soorah al-Jumu'ah (62): 2]

"And remember (O you members of the Prophet's family), that which is recited in your houses of the Ayaat of Allah and the Hikmah." [Soorah al-Ahzab (33):34]

These verses show;

(i) Al-Hikmah is revealed by Allah

(ii) It is part of the Messenger's duty to teach the Hikmah

(iii) It is something recited and remembered in the Prophet's household.

There is nothing in status and position that can be mentioned alongside the Qur'aan apart from the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. This honor cannot be given to conventional wisdom inherited from the past or even to the books given to

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previous nations. At the time of the Sahabah, such 'wisdom' was not given any consideration as the following incidents testify...

Imran bin Hussain said, "The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Haya' does not bring anything except good." Thereupon, Bashir bin Ka'b said, "It is written in the wisdom paper: Haya leads to solemnity; Haya leads to tranquility (peace of mind)."

Imran said to him, "I am narrating to you the saying of Allah's Messenger ﷺ and you are speaking about your paper (wisdom book)?" [Saheeh al-Bukharee (8/138)]

When Umar ﷺ came to the Prophet ﷺ, he said, "We hear the narrations from the Jews, which sound pleasing to us, so should we not write some of them?" Whereupon he ﷺ said, "Do you want to be baffled as the Jews and the Christians were baffled? I have brought to you (guidance) bright and pure and if Prophet Moosa ﷺ was alive now there would have been no alternative left for him but to follow me." [at-Tirimidhee]

Therefore, Imam Ash-Shafiee (rahimahullah) says explaining the verse about Hikmah,

"So Allah mentioned His Book, i.e., the Qur'aan and (He also mentioned) Hikmah. I have heard that those who are learned in the Qur'aan - whom I approve - hold that Hikmah is the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah.

This is like what [Allah Himself] said but Allah knows best! For the Qur'aan is mentioned [first], followed by Wisdom; [then] Allah mentioned His favor to mankind by teaching them the Qur'aan and Wisdom. So it is not permissible for Hikmah to be called here [anything] save the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. For [Hikmah] is closely linked to the Book of Allah, and Allah has imposed the duty of obedience to His Messenger, and

imposed on men the obligation to obey his orders.

So, it is not permissible to regard anything as a duty save that set forth in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah of His Messenger. For [Allah], as we have [just] stated, prescribed that the belief in His Messenger shall be associated with the belief in Him." [Ar-Risala]

Furthermore, Book and Hikmah are not the same because at no place is the word 'Hikmah' used for the Book or the word 'Book' used for 'Hikmah'. They are two separate and distinct entities.

4. **The Qur'aan needs to be understood as Allah meant it to be understood.** Allah says, "It is for Us to collect it and to give you (O Muhammad ﷺ) the ability to recite it (the Qur'aan). And when We have recited it to you, then follow you its recital. Then it is for Us (Allah) to make it clear to you." [Soorah al-Qiyamah (75): 17-19] This verse indicates that both the text of the Qur'aan as well as its explanation have been sent from Allah.

   Allah also says, "And We have also sent down unto you (O Muhammad ﷺ) the reminder and the advice, that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them and that they may give thought." [Soorah an-Nahl (16): 44]

   This verse mentions that the **message requires explanation**, and the Messenger ﷺ is the one assigned to provide it. This explanation is not only needed by people at the time of the Prophet ﷺ, but by all subsequent generations until the last day. Rather, the more the distance in age from the time of the Prophet ﷺ, the more the need to solve differences in understanding by reference to the original state of affairs.

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Furthermore, this verse also gives instructions about the order in which the Qur'aan should be understood. First the Messenger ﷺ explains Allah's revelation clearly to mankind and then they give thought. People are not free to let loose their thoughts and speculate about the message of the Qur'aan whilst ignoring the teachings of the Messenger ﷺ⌧

According to Hadeeth-rejecters, 'God Himself states in the Qur'aan that it is He Who explains the Qur'aan. This means that the Qur'aan explains itself.' But why then have the Hadeeth-rejectors not sufficed themselves with the text of the Qur'aan and have written huge volumes discussing and explaining the Qur'aan?

Because there are verses in the Qur'aan that explain each other, and there are verses that require explanation from the Sunnah.

5. **The Qur'aan can only be correctly understood in light of the Sunnah.** One of the most important duties with which Allah's Messenger ﷺ was sent with was to convey the Qur'aan to mankind and to teach it. Allah says, "Indeed, Allah conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muhammad ﷺ) from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses, and purifying them, and teaching them the Book (Qur'aan) and Hikmah while before that they had been in manifest error." [Soorah aal-Imran (3): 164]

"And We have also sent down unto you (O Muhammad ﷺ) the Reminder and the Advice that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them." [Soorah an-Nahl (16): 44]

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i) **The Sunnah explains the commands of the Qur'aan in details.** For example, Allah commands His believing slaves in Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 43, "...establish As-Salaat and give Zakaat..."

Details of the command to establish the Salaat are not found in the Qur'aan such as the required number of daily prayers, the units of prayers (rak'ah) and the recitation in each mode of prayer as well as the manner of performing the prayer from the beginning to the end, etc. All these guidelines are to be taken from the Sunnah.

Similarly, Allah commands in Soorah al-Jumuah (62), verse 9, "When the call is proclaimed for the Salaat on the day of Friday..."

The words of the call to prayer (Adhaan) is known from the Sunnah. Likewise, all issues of Zakaat e.g., the minimum amount on which Zakaat becomes payable, the percentage paid, the kind of wealth, goods and animals on which Zakaat is obligatory, etc. are clearly explained by the Prophet ﷺ

Other important acts of worship like fasting and Hajj are touched upon briefly in the Qur'aan and for detailed injunctions Muslims are to refer to the Sunnah.

Another example is the Qur'aanic punishment for the thief. "Cut off the hand of the thief, male or female, as a recompense for that which they committed..." [Soorah al-Maidah (5) :38]

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This verse prescribes the punishment, but the Sunnah designates what is the minimum amount when it is applied. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The hand of the thief shall be cut off if he steals a quarter of a Dinar or more." [Saheeh al- Bukharee]

Note: The manner in which the hadeeth-rejectors explain this verse provides beneficial insight into their methodology and contradictions.

Rashad Khalifa translates this verse as,

"The thief, male or female, you shall mark their hands as a punishment for their crime," and then comments, "The practice of cutting off the thief's hand as decreed by the false Muslims is a satanic practice without Qur'aanic basis." [Rashad Khalifa's Translation]

Therefore, the Qur'aan itself does not have Qur'aanic basis (!) when the hadeeth-rejectors dislike something in it. Rashad Khaleefah used mathematical calculations to interpret cutting as marking.

Ghulam Perwez says about this verse,

"As to a thief, man or woman, such restrictions should be imposed on them which render them incapable of committing such crime."

He comments,

"The literal meaning of the text is 'cutting off the hands.' When the Divine Order of Rabubiyyat is established, every person will be guaranteed means of livelihood.

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If anyone commits a theft under such circumstances he deserves the highest punishment." [Perwez's Translation]

We can see that after all the prolonged argument by the Hadeeth-rejecters that the Qur'aan explains itself and is in no need of the Sunnah to clarify it, we find Perwez adding non-Qur'aanic clauses to the Qur'aanic law to limit the circumstance under which this punishment is applied.

ii) **The Sunnah establishes a meaning, when a number of meanings are possible.** The Qur'aan prescribes, "Cut off the hand of the thief, male or female..." but does not clarify what hand means. The Sunnah explains the hand to mean 'from the wrist down'.

The Qur'aan explains the ruling and manner of Tayammum as, "...But if you are ill or on a journey or any of you comes from answering the call of nature, or you have been in contact with women and you find no water, then perform Tayammum (dry ablution) with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands."

The Sunnah explains that hands in this verse mean only the palms. The word 'hand' could have multiple meanings but the Sunnah specifies the appropriate meaning for each ruling.

Another example is the Saying of Allah, "And those who *yaknizu* (*'Kanz'* means hoarding up) gold and silver, and spend it not in the Way of Allah, announce unto them a painful torment."

Apparently, this verse means that any kind of hoarding or collection of money that is not spent in the Way of Allah will doom one to the painful torment but the Sunnah clarifies that Kanz refers to the wealth on which Zakaat has not been paid. [Introduction to the Sunnah by Dr Suhaib Hassan]

iii) The Sunnah can specify exceptions to a general rule.

In Soorah al-Maida (5): 3, Allah says, "Forbidden to you (for food) are: al-Maytatah (the un-slaughtered dead animals), blood..."

The general rule in this verse prohibits all Maytatah and all forms of blood but the Prophet ﷺ made exceptions to this rule. He ﷺ said, "We were allowed two dead animals and two (kinds of) blood. As for the two dead animals, they are fish and locust. As for the two bloods, they are liver and spleen." [Quoted from Tafseer Ibn Katheer]

iv) The Sunnah also gives additional injunctions in a number of issues.

Allah says, "Those who follow the Messenger, the Prophet who can neither read nor write - he commands them for al-Ma'roof (the prescribed); and forbids them from al-Munkar (the prohibited); he allows them as lawful at-Taiyibaat (i.e. all good), and prohibits them as unlawful

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al-Khabaaith (i.e. all evil), he releases them from their heavy burdens (of Allah's Covenant), and from the fetters (bindings) that were upon them. So those who believe in him (Muhammad ﷺ), honor him, help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, it is they who will be successful." [Soorah al-A'raf (7):157]

A number of religious injunction thus emanate from the Sunnah like the prohibition of the flesh of the donkeys, dogs, beasts with canine teeth and birds of prey. He ﷺ made wearing gold and silk Halaal for the women and Haraam for the men, etc.

v) Inadequacy of language alone to understand Qur'aan.

There is no scope for anyone with all his Arabic scholarship to understand the glorious Qur'aan without Sunnah. The Sahabah were the most knowledgeable in the language in which the Qur'aan was revealed at a time when Arabic was not blemished by the incorrectness of the colloquial language or their grammatical mistakes. Yet, they erred in understanding the verses when they relied on language alone, and following are some examples...

a) Allah says in the Qur'aan, "It is those who believe and confuse not their belief with Dhulm (wrongdoing), for them (only) there is security and they are the guided." [Soorah al-An'am (6): 82]

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When this verse was revealed, the Sahabah understood 'Dhulm' in its wider sense meaning 'all wrongdoing' and this caused much concern because no one is free from wrongdoing. The Prophet ﷺ explained that 'Dhulm' in this verse refers to Shirk.

b) "...eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread." [Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 187]

This verse describes the time when the fast begins. A companion understood this verse literally and slept with two threads under his pillow to determine when the fast should begin. The Prophet ﷺ explained that the black and white thread actually refers to the white streak of dawn and the darkness of night.

[Adapted from, 'The Status of Sunnah in Islam' by Allama Al-Albanee]

vi) Detailed book?

The hadeeth-rejecters maintain that the Qur'aan is a detailed Book that does not require any other source to supplement it – not even Sunnah. Despite this we have seen how Ghulam Parwez added additional clauses to the order of cutting the thief's hand. Furthermore, the Hadeeth-rejecters seriously contradict themselves when they author detailed volumes explaining and deliberating upon the Qur'aan and propose additional clauses and conditions to the Qur'aan's orders.

Another example of this is Rashad Khaleefah's comment on the verse, "Those who eat Riba (usury) will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the

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standing of a person beaten by Shaytan leading him to insanity."

Rashad Khaleefah says,

"It is an established economic principle that excessive interest on loans can utterly destroy a whole country. During the last few years we have witnessed the devastation of the economies of many nations where excessive interest is charged. Normal interest - less than 20% - where no one is victimized and everyone is satisfied is not usury."

The 20% condition is not mentioned in the Qur'aan.

To emphasize that the Qur'aan does not need supplementary explanations, the Hadeeth-rejecters quote, "We have neglected nothing in the Book, then unto their Lord they (all) shall be gathered." [Soorah al-An'am (6): 38] "And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'aan) as an exposition of everything..." [Soorah an-Nahl (16): 89]

For the correct understanding, we refer to the complete verse, i.e., "There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book, then unto their Lord they (all) shall be gathered." [Soorah al-An'aam (6):38]

One interpretation is that 'the Book' in this verse refers to the preserved tablet in which Allah has recorded

everything that occurs, and this is similar to another verse, "And no (moving) living creature is there on earth but its provision is due from Allah. And He knows its dwelling place and its deposit all is in a Clear Book (al-Lawh al-Mahfoodh)." [Soorah Hud (11): 6]

Even if one interprets 'the Book' to be the Qur'aan then Allah has not neglected to mention in it the Prophet's duty as the example, teacher and explainer of the Qur'aan and obedience to him ﷺ is ordered in seventy verses.

While 'the Book' does not contain details of the prayers and fasting, it did not neglect to direct the believers towards the example of the Prophet ﷺ where it can be found. And the same explanation holds good for the other similar verse, i.e., "We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'aan) as an exposition of everything..."

6) Allah's Protection for the Dhikr includes all the Deen.

Allah says, "Verily, it is We who have sent down the Dhikr (revelation), and surely We will guard it." [Soorah Hijr (15): 9]

The word, 'Dhikr' has been used in the Book of Allah to refer to the Qur'aan, the Deen in general, the remembrance of Allah, the Friday prayer (62:9) and Allah's Messenger ﷺ as in the verse, "Allah has indeed sent down to you a Dhikr (reminder). A Messenger who recites to you the verses of Allah." [Soorah at-Talaaq (65): 10-11)]

Therefore, Allah promised to protect the Qur'aan, its understanding, the example of His Messenger ﷺ, the Prayer and all aspects of the Deen which collectively are 'the Dhikr'. The text of the Qur'aan will not be protected if its understanding which is

contained in the Sunnah is not protected.

Furthermore, if anyone wants to restrict the meaning of 'Dhikr' to the Qur'aan then they need to present a proof. A segment of Munkireen al-Hadeeth argues that Qur'aan was the only revelation and hence Dhikr exclusively refers to the Qur'aan. This argument has already been replied to earlier with examples that the Qur'aan itself refers to a revelation apart from it.

Another group of Munkareen al-Hadeeth claims that the additional guidance received by the Messenger ﷺ was for his period only. This is a false argument because the latter generations who do not have a living Messenger amongst themselves are more in need of the guidance and explanations that was revealed apart from the Qur'aan. This group also claims that the Messenger ﷺ himself did not undertake any measures to preserve the hadeeth, the like of which was undertaken to preserve the Qur'aan. We will shed light on the issue in the following pages.

To summarize, the insistence of Munkareen al-Hadeeth that the Dhikr which Allah had Promised to protect, is only the Qur'aan is not based on any sound proof but upon their assumption and conjecture.

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Defining Sunnah and Hadeeth

The Sunnah is composed of the sayings, actions and silent approvals of Allah's Messenger ﷺ

Sunnah also refers to the correct Aqeedah (creed) and worship, as opposed to innovations, which is why many scholars refer to their books on Aqeedah as, 'the Sunnah,' like 'As-Sunnah' of Imam Ahmed, 'As-Sunnah' by al-Khallah, 'Sharhus-Sunnah' by al-Barbaharee.

The authentic narrations that have reached us about the sayings, actions and approvals of Allah's Messenger ﷺ are referred to as Hadeeth.

The Sunnah is therefore contained within the authentic hadeeth and is synonymous with the authentic hadeeth.

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Shaikhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyah explains, "The Sunnah that is a must to be followed, for which one is praised due to following it, and blamed for going against it, is the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ in matters of belief, matters of worship and the rest of the affairs of the religion and what is known only by knowledge of the hadeeth of the Prophet ﷺ that are confirmed on his authority."

[Majmoo Fatawa (3/387)
Quoted from The Importance and Authority of the Sunnah
by Jamaal al-Din M. Zarabozo]

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Preservation of Hadeeth

From what has preceded, we have seen the significance of the Sunnah as a source of the Deen and it is only a natural consequence that the study of Hadeeth has been a constant pursuit since the beginning of Islam to the present time.

The Companions of the Prophet ﷺ eagerly observed what he ﷺ said and did, and memorized it faithfully. Some of them even recorded Hadeeth by writing in 'saheefahs'.

The Ahadeeth were passed down from generation to generation among the most trustworthy of individuals in a tremendous effort that not only preserved the exact words of the Messenger ﷺ, but also the entire chain of narration and the condition of the narrators (memory, period, beliefs, etc.).

This manner and meticulousness by which Ahadeeth have been preserved is unique and unparallel in literary history, and one needs to study the science of hadeeth-verification in order to truly appreciate it.

To get a good overview of how Islamic texts were preserved we start by understanding the methodology of the compilation of the Qur'aan so that it can be compared to the methodology of Hadeeth compilation.

Compilation of the Qur'aan

Allah says, "He, it is Who, sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves." [Soorah al-Munafiqun (63): 2]

Being mostly unlettered, the primary mode by which the Arabs preserved their knowledge like poetry and history was by memorization. When the Qur'aan was revealed it too, was memorized by the Sahabah and in addition some of the sahabah were assigned by the Prophet ﷺ to write down the Qur'aan.

At the time of the Prophet's death ﷺ, all of the Qur'aan had been verified and written on various materials like cloth, stone, date-palm leaves, etc., and remained scattered as loose fragments in the possession of various Sahabah.

It had not been compiled in the form of a book because during the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ the Qur'aan was continually being revealed, and the order of the verses is not chronological. There was also no pressing need for it because of the large number of accurate memorizers and reciters of the Qur'aan.

During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq, many memorizers of the Qur'aan were killed in battles and a collective decision was taken to compile the Qur'aan in a single book in order to

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preserve it. The enormously significant task was given to Zayd ibn Thaabit رضي الله عنه who began to collect the Qur'aan from what was written on palm stalks, thin white stones and also from the men who knew it by heart.

Zayd ibn Thaabit, despite being a memorizer of the Qur'aan himself, was methodical in his compilation and would not agree to write down any verse until two of the Sahabah testified that they had heard it from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. In this manner, the entire Qur'aan was verified and written on leather, and remained with Abu Bakr until his death and then with Umar until the end of his life, and then with Hafsah the daughter of Umar and the wife of the Prophet ﷺ⌧

At the time of Uthmaan ibn Affan, the Islamic empire had spread far and wide and people were being taught to recite the Qur'aan in seven different dialects (the Qur'aan was revealed in seven dialects). This began to cause confusion in far off provinces, and a decision was taken to make an official standardized copy from the manuscript of Abu Bakr and limit the people to its recitation.

More copies were made from this copy known as 'Mushaf Uthmaan,' and sent to different parts of the Islamic empire. This Mushaf was unpointed (i.e., it had no diacritical marks). The addition of diacritical marks to the Mushaf happened in the era of Abd al-Malik ibn Marwaan to ease recitation.

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Compilation of the Hadeeth

Like the Qur'aan, the sayings and actions of the Prophet ﷺ were preserved primarily at the time of the Sahabah by memorization and they were also noted down. This was due to encouragement and direction by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself, who said, "May Allah make radiant the man who has heard what I said and has preserved it in his memory until he conveys it to another. Perhaps, the one he conveyed it to has a better understanding than him." [At-Tirmidhee] He ﷺ also said, "Convey from me even a single verse. You may relate from the Children of Israel without objection. Anyone who deliberately tells a lie against me will have prepared his seat in Hellfire." [Bukharee]

The Prophet ﷺ also made clear the necessity of accurately preserving and transmitting Hadeeth when he warned, "Lying about me is not like lying about anybody else. Whoever lies about me let him take his place in Hell." [Agreed upon] So serious was this matter that at the time of the Messenger ﷺ, lying about him ﷺ was punishable by death. (*1)

(*1) Ibn 'Adi transmitted on the authority of Buraida b. Hussaib al-Aslami, that in the pre-Islamic era a man wanted to marry in the tribe of Bani Laith which had been living a mile away from Madina. But the tribe did not concede to his will. Later he visited

Abu Hurayrah said, "People say that I have narrated many Ahadeeth. Had it not been for two verses in the Qur'aan I would not have narrated a single Hadeeth and the verses are, "Verily, those who conceal the clear sign and the guidance which We have sent down..." [Soorah al-Baqarah (2):159-160]

No doubt, our Muhajir (emigrant) brothers used to be busy in the market with their business (bargains); and our Ansari brothers used to be busy with their property (agriculture). But I used to stick to Allah's Messenger ﷺ content with what will fill my stomach and I used to attend that which they used not to attend and I used to memorize that which they used not to memorize." [Saheeh al-Bukharee (3/118)]

Famous Memorizers of Hadeeth amongst the Sahabah included Abu Hurayrah, Abdullah Ibn Abbas, Aa'isha Siddeeqa, Abdullah Ibn Umar, Jabir Ibn Abdullah, Anas Ibn Maalik and Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree. Each of them memorized over a 1000 Ahadeeth.

Famous Memorizers of Hadeeth amongst the Tabieen included Sa'eed Ibn al-Mussayab, Urwah Ibn Zubair, Saalim Ibn Abdullah Ibn Umar (the son of Abdullah Ibn Umar) and Naaf'i (the servant of Abdullah Ibn Umar). [see. 'The Compilation of Hadeeth' by Shaikh Abdul-Ghaffar Hassan. Translated by Abu Hibban and Abu Khuzaimah]

---

them dressed in a fine garment. He told them, 'The Prophet gave me this garment and authorized me to judge among you in all issues regarding money and soul.' Then he came to the woman who he wanted to marry. The people of the tribe sent someone to the Prophet who instantly said, 'The enemy of Allah has lied.' Then the Prophet deputized a man and instructed him, 'Kill him if you find him alive and burn him if you find him dead.' The man came to the spot and discovered that he had already met his death by the bite of the snake. So he burnt him. [Suyuti, Tahdhib aliKhawas min Akadhib al-Qussas Beirut-1972 pg. 32-33]

Writing Hadeeth

References to writing the Hadeeth can be found in various narrations some examples are mentioned below:

1. Abdullah ibn Umar ibn al-As stated that they used to record everything they heard from the Prophet until they were warned that the Prophet was a human being who may be angry at times and pleased at times. Abdullah stopped writing Ahadeeth until he asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about it, who said, "Write (my hadeeth), by the One, in Whose Hand is my soul, nothing leaves it (the Prophet's mouth) save the truth." [Saheeh Sunan Abu Dawood (2/695)]

2. Al-Bukharee recorded in his Saheeh that Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه said, "One can find none of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah relating more Ahadeeth than me, except Abdullah ibn Amr because he used to record the hadeeth while I did not do so."

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3. Al-Bukharee recorded that a man from Yemen came to the Prophet ﷺ on the day of the conquest of Makkah and asked him if he could get the Prophet's speech recorded and the Prophet ﷺ approved and told someone, "Write it for the father of so and so.”

Al-Azami in his work Studies in Early Hadeeth Literature (p.34-60) has listed and discussed some fifty Companions of the Prophet who wrote Ahadeeth. He listed eighty-seven of the scholars covering the late first and early second centuries who recorded hadeeth.

Then he listed from the early second century scholars, 251 people who collected and recorded hadeeth. Thus al-Azami has produced a list of 437 scholars who had recorded Ahadeeth and all of them lived and died before the year 250 A.H. Many of them are from before the time of Umar ibn Abdul-Azeez who is credited with having been the first person to ask for the compilation/collection of hadeeth.

Al-Azami said,

> "I have established in my doctoral thesis Studies in early Hadeeth Literature that even in the first century of the Hijra many hundreds of booklets of hadeeth were in circulation. If we add another hundred years, it would be difficult to enumerate the quantity of booklets and books, which were in circulation. Even by the most conservative estimate they were many thousands."

[Studies in Hadeeth Methodology and Literature (p.64)]

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He also demonstrated in his Ph.D. thesis the reason why none or very few of them are still in existence today

> "These books were not destroyed nor did they perish, but (they) were absorbed into the work of later authors. When the encyclopedia-type books were produced scholars did not feel the necessity to keep the early books or booklets and so slowly they disappeared."
>
> [Studies in Hadeeth Methodology and Literature, p.64]

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Saheefah Hammaam ibn Munabbih

"Of the earliest collections of hadeeth one in particular deserves closer attention. This is the Saheefah of Hammaam ibn Munabbih. It is actually a written collection of hadeeth that the Companion Abu Hurayrah dictated to his student Hammaam.

Since Abu Hurayrah died around 58 A.H. (or some 48 years after the death of the Prophet) this collection must have been dictated to Hammaam sometime from that date...

Imam Ahmad Ibn Hambal incorporated the entire work except two hadeeth into his famous Musnad.

Al-Sulami (a muhaddith), on the other hand, continued the passing on of this collection as an independent work. It was continually passed on until the 9th century which is the date of the Berlin manuscript, one of the four manuscripts of this work that is still in existence.

Since Ahadeeth in Ahmad's Musnad are arranged according to the Companions who narrated the Hadeeth. It is very easy to find all of the hadeeth from Hammam on the authority of Abu Hurayrah in that collection.

Other books where the Ahadeeth are arranged according to Fiqh topics also incorporated a great deal of this Saheefah.

A study of Saheeh al-Bukharee and Saheeh Muslim will demonstrate the following. Out of the 137 Ahadeeth in the Saheefah of Hammaam:

29 are recorded by both al-Bukharee and Muslim

22 others are recorded by only al-Bukharee

48 other are recorded only by Muslim.

Thus 99 of the 137 hadeeth may be found in either Saheeh al-Bukharee or Saheeh Muslim...

It is interesting to note that all of the following works that contain many, if not all, of the hadeeth of this saheefah are now published: al-Bukharee's al-Jaami al-Saheeh, Muslim's Saheeh, Ahmad's Musnad, Abdul Razzaq's Musannaf, Ma'mars Jami and even Hammam's Saheefah. All of these collections may be studied to see that even the wordings of the hadeeth have not been changed from the time of Abu Hurayrah to the time of al-Bukharee."

[Authority and Importance of Sunnah by Jamal al-Din Zarabozo]

Structure of Hadeeth and Methodology of its authentication

Sanad and Matn

[Adapted from, Introduction to the Science of Hadith by Dr. Suhaib Hassan]

The following is an example of a Hadeeth:

> Musaddad told us that Yahyaa informed him from Shu'bah, from Qataadah from Anas from the Prophet that he said, "None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."
>
> [Saheeh al-Bukharee]

This means that the Hadeeth scholar Imam al-Bukharee recorded in his book, 'Saheeh al-Bukharee' the statement, "None of you truly believes...", which he heard from his Hadeeth teacher Musaddad, who heard it from his teacher Yahya, who was informed by his teacher Shu'bah that he heard it from his teacher Qatadah, a student of the Prophet's Companion, who heard it quoted by the Sahabee (Companion) Anas ibn Malik from Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

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Thus, a Hadeeth consists of two main parts Sanad and Matn

Sanad: Sanad or Isnad, is the chain of narrators that lead to the text of the Hadeeth. The Sanad consists of all those who narrated the text, starting with the last narrator (who records the Hadeeth in his book) and ending with the Prophet.

Following is the Sanad of the Hadeeth mentioned before... Al-Bukharee > Musaddad > Yahyaa > Shu'bah > Qataadah > Anas > Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Matn: The text of the Hadeeth or what the Prophet actually said or did is called the Matn. In the Hadeeth mentioned before, the Matn is, "None of you truly believes until..."

Even though the text (Matn) of a Hadeeth may seem to be logical and reasonable, it needs an authentic Sanad with reliable reporters to be acceptable. The Sanad is thus the most important part of the Hadeeth as it is the bridge leading to the Hadeeth itself.

Abdullah bin al-Mubarak (d.181AH), one of the teachers of Imam al-Bukharee said, "The Isnad is from the Deen (religion). If it wasn't for the Isnad anyone would say anything he wished." Hence, one must be careful only to take his religion from people who are trustworthy and who can trace what they have said back to the Prophet ﷺ and this can only be done through the use of isnad.

During the lifetime of the Prophet and after his death, his Companions (Sahabah) used to refer to him directly, when quoting

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his sayings. The Successors (Tabi'oon) followed suit; some of them used to quote the Prophet through the Companions, while others would omit the intermediate authority, (such a Hadeeth is called Mursal).

During the time of the Successors, they were either one of two narrators between them and the Prophet. But from then on the need for verification of each isnad rose as Imam Malik (d. 179) said, "The First one to utilize the isnad was Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri (d.124)." [Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi, Al-Jarh wal-Ta'dil (8 vols., Hyderabad, 1360-1373), 1:20]

The need to verify the Hadeeth rose because various sects appeared among the Muslims who fabricated Hadeeth. Ibn Sirin (d.110), a Successor, said, "They would not ask about the Isnad. But when the fitnah (turmoil/civil war) happened, they said, 'Name to us your men. So the narrations of the Ahlus-Sunnah (Adherents to the Sunnah) would be accepted, while those of Ahlul-Bidah (Adherents to Innovations) would not be accepted.' [Saheeh Muslim bi Sharh an-Nawawi - Introduction]

After the early years, the isnad and its proper use became standardized and its knowledge became an independent branch of Hadeeth (known as Ilm al-Jarh wal-Ta'deel). This continued until the major collections of hadeeth were compiled in the third century. In fact, the tradition of relating hadeeth by their isnads continued until the fifth century.

After that time books were passed on mostly by ijaza (permission given to other to narrate one's books or hadeeth) although, there are still some scholars today who can narrate hadeeth with a complete chain from themselves back to the Prophet ﷺ

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Muhammad ibn Hatim ibn al-Mudhaffar wrote, "Verily, Allah has honored and distinguished this nation and raised it above others by the use of isnad. None of the earlier or present nations have unbroken isnads.

They have (ancient) pages in their possession but their books have been mixed with their historical reports and they are not able to distinguish between what was originally revealed as the Torah or the Gospel and what has been added later of reports that have been taken from untrustworthy (or, mostly likely, unknown) narrators." [Quoted in al-Mukhtasar fi Ilm Rijaal al-Athaar (Dar al-Kutub al-Hadhithiya) p. 18]

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Doubts and their Response

Doubt 1: Hadeeth were not written (the primary objection)

Parwez wrote,

> "... if memory was enough of a viable resource to be depended upon, why then was the need felt to have the Holy Qur'aan dictated and written on paper, then recited again to remove any possibility of errors or mistakes during the process of its dictation.
>
> If any disciple of the Messenger had learnt those hadeeth or sayings of the Messenger by heart, we still are not in a position to vouch for it until and unless those sayings were not verified and the seal of approval cast on them by the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ himself, we cannot depend on them."
>
> [Muqaam-e-Hadeeth (Actual Status of Hadeth) by G. A. Parwez. Chp. 1]

Response:

1. The procedures that were adopted to preserve the Qur'aan are all mentioned in the Hadeeth. By quoting the Hadeeth as proof, Parwez has inadvertently accepted the authority and indispensability of the hadeeth.

2. We have seen that memorization was the primary means by which the Qur'aan was preserved. The written parchments of the Qur'aan remained scattered until they were collected at the time of Abu Bakr ؓ. Likewise, the hadeeth too, were preserved primarily by memorization and a lot of them were written.

3. Some Hadeeth-rejecters speculate that the Qur'aan was compiled fully into a book by the Prophet himself but this compilation is not found. If writing was the primary means by which Qur'aan was meant to be preserved, how could this compilation not exist? The earliest written compilation of the Qur'aan which is believed to be one of the Uthmani Mushaf is on exhibit at the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul, Turkey.

4. 'The seal of approval' for the Sahabah has been provided by Allah, the Most Glorious, as the Qur'aan states, "And foremost to embrace Islam of the Muhajirun and the Ansar and those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him." [Soorah at-Tawbah (9): 100]

Would a group of people who attributes falsehood to the Messenger ﷺ or are careless when transmitting his words after being warned against it be worthy of being described as, "Allah is well-pleased with them"?

5. The fact that extra precautions were taken in the preservation of the Qur'aan does not mean that the Hadeeth were not preserved or were not meant to be protected.

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Doubt 2: No Effort was put into preserving Hadeeth

Parwez wrote with regards to the preservation of Hadeeth,

> "...Though the mind questions, if hadeeth is all that significant, why the Messenger did not take the same measures as he did in the case of Holy Qur'aan?
>
> On the contrary, we find in that very hadeeth, Muhammad ﷺ clearly says, "Do not have anything else dictated from me, save the Qur'aan. If anyone of you has written any word other than the Qur'aan, erase it!"
>
> [Muqaam-e-Hadith Chp. 1]

Response:

1. We have seen earlier that Allah's Messenger ﷺ encouraged the memorization and transmission of Hadeeth.

2. The forbiddance to write anything other than the Qur'aan was a temporary order and a precaution against mixing the Qur'aan and the Hadeeth. Otherwise, Ahadeeth have been written in the presence of Allah's Messenger ﷺ (the narrations have been mentioned earlier).

3. It is ludicrous of Parwez to quote Hadeeth to prove that Hadeeth were not meant to be preserved!!

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Doubt 3: Does every narrator in the chain understand Hadeeth correctly?

Parwez writes,

"You can vouch for the individual's character who is saying the hadeeth to you, how can you say with authority that all the people who carried the words of Messenger were sincere at heart or could be depended on.

It is not the question of having confidence in those writers, the most important aspect is, were they capable of thoroughly understanding a statement and giving the correct interpretation of it.

If we can prove that in two or two and a half centuries the words are capable of remaining in their original form, then I think we have solved the greatest mystery of our times... It is impossible!" [Muqam-e-Hadith by G.A.Parwez. Chp 1]

Response:

1. The mode by which the Qur'aan was transmitted is the same as the way in which the Ahadeeth were transmitted - from generation to generation. The individuals who transmitted the Qur'aan were the same who have transmitted the hadeeth. To accept one and reject the other defies reason. Moreover, the Qur'aanic promise of protection must apply to Hadeeth as well for there is no point in protecting the words but not the interpretation.

2. Information transmitted by means of sanad is superior in authenticity.

"Modern scholars quote the sources of important statements of facts in learned works. But even in the most carefully documented works, there are two drawbacks,

(a) In case of published works, there is little possibility of verifying whether there are any misprints or other inaccuracies; this would not happen if one were to depend on a work only after hearing (it) from the author himself, or obtaining a copy certified by the author, or in case of old works by those who have had the opportunity of hearing it from the author, or his authorized transmitter.

(b) One is content now-a-days with one's immediate source, without much caring to trace the proceeding sources of that source, witness of the event. In Hadeeth works, the case has been different..." [Hamiduallah, Muhammad. Sahifah Hammam ibn Munabbih p.83]

3. The Hadeeth narrators transmit the exact words of the Messenger not its explanation as Imam Shafa'ee explained in al-Risaalah (370-371), "...he (the narrator of the hadeeth) should be one of those who can narrate the hadeeth exactly as he heard it, not based on the meaning but with the exact wording, because if he narrated on the basis of meaning and not with the exact wording, and he does not have knowledge of possible interpretations, he may inadvertently change what is halaal into haraam. But if he narrates it exactly, there is no fear that it may be changed."

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Doubt 4: Hadeeth collection and verification is human effort

Abul A'ala Maudoodi (the founder of Jamaat Islami) has written,

> "No doubt, the material that is provided about the pioneers is of immense value for future narrators of Hadeeth. The only question is how far are these people completely trustworthy. After all they were all but human and we must not expect them to go beyond the scope of human limits. Nor can we guarantee they can compensate for the human lacuna. How are you to say for sure that whatever they are relating is fool proof when the writers themselves are not sure about it?"
>
> [Tafheemat (1/318) Quoted from Maqaam-e-Hadeeth by G.A.Parvez]

He further argues,

> "By these examples we are not, by any means, connoting that their research is abracadabra. Our purpose is only to bring to surface the fact that the narrators were but only human. They were not above human imperfections. Is it then mandatory that whosoever they claim to be worthy of respect ought to be taken with respect."
>
> [Tafheemat (1/321) Quoted from Maqaam-e-Hadeeth by G.A.Parvez]

Response:

It is sufficient for us to quote Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim in reply to those who are not satisfied with the science of Hadeeth verification in determining the Authenticity of Ahadeeth.

Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim said, "If they say, 'The Messenger's Khabars and Ahadeeths do not lead to certainty, "then they are saying

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the truth about themselves. They do not accept these Ahadeeths with certainty. Therefore, they are describing themselves. However, they are not saying the truth when they claim that Ahlul-Hadeeth and people of Sunnah feel the same way." He also said, "They do not know of the various ways that a Hadeeth is narrated, which led people of Sunnah to be certain of it. Therefore, their saying, 'We do not feel certainty about its validity,' does not apply to others...

It is also similar to when one says that he feels pain, pleasure, love or hatred, but another person stands up to him, trying to prove that he does not feel pain, suffering, love or hatred. He tries to produce many doubts, as if saying, 'I do not feel what you feel, therefore what you feel is false because we do not share it!' This is the true misguidance.

Therefore, true is the following saying, 'I say to the one who presents his blame (to us) as a gift, taste what we feel and afterwards blame us, if you can.'

We advise these people to concentrate their attention on what the Messenger was sent with. Preserve, search for and collect it. Study the character of those who narrated it. And when it is proven correct, do not shun it for anything else. Make the Sunnah the ultimate goal and desire behind your efforts... Then, and only then, you will know, 'Do the Khabars of the Messenger of Allah lead to certainty or not?'

However, if you refuse them (the Khabars of the Messenger) and do not seek knowledge from them, then they will not lead you to certainty. Even if you say that they do not lead you to Dhann, then you are truly describing yourself and what you gained and benefitted from them (the Khabars of the Messenger of Allah)." [Hadeeth is Proof Itself in Belief and Laws by Shaikh al-Albanee, p.77]

Deducing the manner of worship in the absence of the Sunnah

The hadeeth-rejecters are faced with a predicament whereby they find orders in the Qur'aan towards establishing the prayers and the other forms of worships, but they do not find in it the required details of performing them. They therefore are forced to either seek direction from the sunnah indirectly or to contradict the claim that the Qur'aan is "sufficient and self-explanatory"' by adding additional clauses or to change the meaning of the worships altogether.

When faced with the problem of defining worships in the absence of the Hadeeth,

Rashad Khalifa's solution was to say,

> "All religious practices in submission (Islam) were given to us through Ibraheem عليه السلام and the Prophet ﷺ himself followed the way of Ibraheem. Therefore, we are to take our worships from Ibraheem عليه السلام"
>
> [The United Submitters International Website]

Comments:

I) If any form of non-Qur'aanic guidance has no place in Islam, then why is the way (Sunnah) of Ibraheem عليه السلام being referred to in matters of the Deen? If the answer to this is the Qur'aan's approval of the way of Ibraheem عليه السلام, then the same holds true to a much greater degree for the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

ii) How is it possible that the Sunnah of Prophet Ibraheem عليه السلام whose Prophethood was limited be preserved by Allah, and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ whose Prophethood continues until the Last Day not be preserved?

iii) Can the hadeeth-rejecters show an uninterrupted chain of narration from Ibraheem عليه السلام to Rashad Khalifa such that the way of Ibraheem عليه السلام is verified and authenticated? They will never be able to show this but in the case of the hadeeth of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, then tens of thousands of such chains exist by which hadeeth can be verified and authenticated.

iv) How will the way of Ibraheem عليه السلام be traced? Do we have historical records whose authenticity is as absolute as that of the Qur'aan or will the way of Ibraheem be deduced from the current practices of the Muslims that are based on the Sunnah of Muhammad ﷺ (and this in effect is accepting the Sunnah)? Or will the way of Ibraheem عليه السلام be deduced from others who claim Abrahamic roots like the Jews, Christians, Druze or the Sabians?

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v) What is more reliable to determine? The authentic way of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ from the vast volumes of hadeeth literature and colossal records on hadeeth narrators that exist with us today or the way of Ibraheem عليه السلام that has no such records and would be dependant on the enormously different practices and traditions that exist amongst various religions that claim Abrahamic roots!!

Ghulam Parwez's solution to the predicament is the outright rejection of the well-known understanding of salaat. He claims that salaat has lost its religious meaning and is merely a national symbol. According to him, the only reason for not abandoning salaat outright is "because 'national symbols' like salaat, help maintain harmony in the society. However, if a government based on 'Qur'aanic system' comes, it will have the authority to change the pillars of Islam."

Ghulam Parwez says about individual prayers,

"So far our insight goes we do never find any glimpse of guidance for the individual Salaat anywhere in the Qur'aan." [Various Aspects of Salaat by G. A. Parwez]

and he interpreted the congregational prayer to be,

"time-related congregation where, after God's appreciation, and adjudication of His obeisance and subordination, important matters are mutually consulted. These are called the time-related congregation of Salaat. That is why the order of 'mutual consultation' and 'establishment of Salaat' have come together. 'Assalaa-tul-jaam'ia (the congregational prayer)', so, hearing these

words, the people used to assemble and the matter under discussion used to be considered. This also makes it clear as to what the exposition of Salaat was in those days."

[Various Aspects of Salaat by G. A. Parwez]

Comments:

I) Ahadeeth are needed by those who wish to follow Islam as taught by Allah's Messenger Muhammad ﷺ and understood by the Sahabah. As for those who wish to invent their own religion and interpret the Qur'aan as they wish, then they indeed do not need the Sunnah.

ii) Parwez's claims that when people were called with the words, '*Assalaa-tul-jaam'ia*', they would assemble for mutual consultation. Since this is not mentioned in the Qur'aan, on what basis did he take 'non-Qur'aanic guidance' to explain the 'Qur'aanic concept' of congregational prayer?

Furthermore, what is the source of this information? It is neither mentioned in the Hadeeth nor does it have any historical record?

iii) In his writing, Parwez extensively quotes from history. He even quotes from the 'Encyclopedia Britannica' even though, the recording and preservation of hadeeth is far superior and meticulous than the recording of history.

iv) In Parwez's view, the state has the authority to reinterpret even the pillars of Islam, and thus he makes Islam subservient to the state. His view is that the state is itself Deen and Islam. He says,

"In Deen, man's entire life is in obedience to a collective order. In modern phraseology, it would be termed as, 'State.' That is, to act on Deen, it is necessary to have an 'independent state.'" [Reasons for Decline of Muslims]

Amin Islahi, who is of a slightly different orientation of hadeeth-rejecters, when faced with the same predicament, came up with his own solution. He says,

"To my knowledge, no Hadeeth exists which satisfies the definition of *Khabar-i-Tawatur*. (i.e., a *Mutawaatir Hadeeth*)."

[Difference Between Hadeeth and Sunnah by Amin Islahi]

Thus, in his opinion, all ahadeeth are Ahaad, and cannot be independent sources of beliefs or actions. However, he accepts the role of the Prophet as the teacher of the Qur'aan and says,

"The view point of those who do not believe in the Sunnah, i.e., the role of the Prophet ﷺ is simply that of a courier who delivers the post is absolutely baseless and nonsensical. The Prophet ﷺ is not only the Messenger who delivered the Book to humanity but is simultaneously a teacher of the Sharee'ah and purifier of souls." And he states, "The Sunnah is binding on us as much as the Qur'aan itself."

His view is that,

"The Sunnah has not been founded on Ahadeeth, which have an inherent prospect of either being right or wrong... On the contrary, it is based on the perpetual adherence of the Ummah to it. Just as the veracity of the Qur'aan is proved by perpetuity in verbal adherence, likewise the veracity of Sunnah is equally proved by the Ummah's perpetuity in practical adherence to it.

For instance, we have not adopted the prayers, pilgrimage, etc., in all their details because a few narrators explained them to us, but we act in a particular manner because the Prophet ﷺ acted accordingly. Thereafter, through him learnt the Companions, and through them learnt the followers of the Companions, and then the successors thereof learnt through the followers. In this manner, the later generations continued to learn through their earlier predecessors. In case, the narrative records also testify to this effect, it should be taken as additional testimony." [end quote]

Comments:

1. The dissatisfaction of the hadeeth-rejecters with the science of Hadeeth verification is a sign of their ignorance of the different modes of hadeeth transmission as Imaam Ibn al-Qayyim pointed out.

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2. The mode of transmission described for the "perpetual adherence of the Ummah", i.e. the companions learnt from the Prophet and taught it to the next generation, and the next generation to those who followed them, and so on - this is the same mode of transmission by which the hadeeth were transmitted, only that in the case of the Hadeeth, they were transmitted meticulously by one generation of hadeeth-scholars to the next and they were individuals dedicated to the verification, memorization, collection and accurate transmission of hadeeth.

As for the wider Ummah, then with time they split into sects and groups, disagreed due to different interpretations, adopted cultural practices and innovations, so how does one distinguish between actions that have been "perpetually adhered to by the Ummah" and those that were introduced later on? Therefore it is self-evident as to which of the two modes will the knowledge be authentically and accurately transmitted.

3. Even though Amin Islahi says, "the Sunnah is binding on us as much as the Qur'aan itself." he renders this statement meaningless by excluding hadeeth (the authentically transmitted statements of the Prophet ﷺ) from the Sunnah.

All in all, the source of the deen according to him is exclusively the Qur'aan; and he accepts the prevalent religious rituals in the broader sense since there is no means to authenticate the specific details of worships without referring to the hadeeth. This is exactly what Parvez accepts as the deen.

4. Accepting the existing religious practices, gives both Parwez and Amin Islahi the convenience of not being obliged to explain

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specific details of worship and many other issues from the Qur'aan. They could then exclude the hadeeth as a definite and independent source of the deen without providing its alternative.

5. Despite all efforts, none of the three hadeeth-rejecters could truly free themselves of their dependence on knowledge acquired from hadeeth. Rashad Khaleefah has to patch the shortcoming of his way by accepting the hadeeth in the name of 'Ibraheem's sunnah.'

   Amin Islahi had to accept the hadeeth by describing it instead as 'perpetual adherence of the Ummah.'

Ghulam Parwez inadvertently recognized the hadeeth by naming it 'historical research' as he writes in the book, 'Islam - A Challenge to Religion,'

> "The Book that God gave to Muhammad (ﷺ) through revelation and which he passed on to the Muslims in the form in which we know it today. The internal evidence provided by the Qur'aan itself as well as historical research proves beyond a shadow of doubt that not even a comma of the original Qur'aanic text has been changed or is likely to be altered in the future."

What historical research covers the details of the collection and preservation of the Qur'aan apart from the hadeeth literature?

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Are Hadeeth-Rejectors Liberal?

The Munkareen al-Hadeeth proclaim themselves to be liberal intellectuals who are opposed to stagnation in Islamic thought and respect differences of opinion. For instance,

Parwez's organization says,

> "Tolu-e-Islam's understanding of the Holy Qur'aan is not final. In fact, the understanding of the Holy Qur'aan cannot be considered final with respect to any one person or a particular time period. Just as humans change, develop over time and adjust themselves to their environment so should the understanding of the Holy Qur'aan.
>
> As the Holy Qur'aan is the final message for all of eternity, we should not be limiting ourselves to the outmoded explanations provided by scholars hundreds of years ago nor should we allow misinterpretations of Allah's true guidance to come to the fore." [An Introduction to Tolu-e-Islam Movement (pt no.3)]

By these liberal principles, the Munkireen al-Hadeeth allow themselves to differ with the well-established understanding of

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Islamic issues that have been agreed upon by consensus amongst the greatest scholars of Islam. But they show little tolerance for those who disagree with their opinions and interpretations. Following are two examples:

1) Perwez classifies people as faithful and disbelievers by Tafseer based on his personal opinion. He says explaining the terms, 'Dunya' (worldly life) and 'Aakhirah' (Hereafter):

> "The connotation and usage of the words 'this world' and 'the Hereafter' by the Qur'aan not only imply its apparent meanings... in this world there are two kinds of persons.
>
> One who leaps for the 'here and now' or the immediate gain. Their entire effort is for this immediate gain and for their own interests. They are not concerned as to what will happen to those who are to come or the people who are to follow? They are only occupied with their self-indulgences and luxuries... Hence, by Qur'aanic connotations the 'here and now' and the immediate gains are called the world - Dunya - while the future of this world is called Aakherath.
>
> Therefore Qur'aanic view of Matha-e-Dunya would mean that gain which one seeks for himself. Matha-e-Aakherath (possession of the Hereafter) means those possessions, material, equipment and properties saved and stored for the coming generations."

On this basis, he says,

> "...Those people who only regard this present life as the only life having no care or bother about the Hereafter... With this they do gain the 'nearby and the immediate gains.'

They may be said to be the Group of Kuffar, i.e. who deny the Future.

As for those people (group two) that keep both the present and the future (the Dunya and Aakherath) in mind. For this, it has an order of life that does not distance the Present and the Hereafter... The Qur'aan calls this group Momineen. Their view encompasses the development of the entire humankind that they carry out in accordance with the set program of the Qur'aan.

Now coming to the Group Three which divides the world and the Hereafter into two different worlds. It thinks that there are some efforts, which bestow gains only for this present world, and there are some, which decorate the Hereafter. To them it is not necessary that who-so-ever's Hereafter is decorated should have their present decorated as well. In fact, against this, they understand that the Hereafter is a success of those whose worldly life is chagrined, of disappointment, of misfortune and failure... Those who say so wish to formulate two different laws each to develop the present and the future. This is Shirk. This is not Eemaan in the unity of God." [end quote]

Comments:

a) We can see here that anyone who does not agree with 'Parwez's Materialistic Manifesto' is either a kaafir (disbeliever) or a Mushrik (one who does shirk) while the only believers being those who follow Parwez's interpretation of 'Aaakhirah' and this interpretation has no precedence in the 1400 years of Islam.

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b) According to Perwez's interpretation of the Qur'aan, Dunya means our present and the one who gathers possessions for himself is a disbeliever. 'Aakhirah' is to save and store provisions for the coming generations. The one who works for immediate gains and stores some provisions for the coming generations is a believer (Mumin).

The selfless philanthropist however, who has dedicated himself totally to save for the future generations is condemned the utmost as a polytheist (Muskhrik) and Faithless! While the world honors such people, names streets and foundations after them and considers them role-models for the future generation, Ghulam Parwaz condemns them and finds them guilty of the worst crime - Shirk.

c) It is apparent that Perwez's writing is, nothing more than a twisted materialist manifesto where he defines the Deen (religion) as the state, the hereafter as amassing possessions for the future, and the congregational prayer as a gathering for mutual consultation.

2) Farahi's principle of coherence and the result of not following it.

Farahi was Amin Ahsan Islahi's mentor. His follower praises him saying,

> "For almost fifty years, Farahi reflected over the Qur'aan, which remained his chief interest and the focal point of all his writings. His greatest contribution in its study is his discovery of coherence in the Qur'aan...

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Farahi demonstrated to all the western critics that with a sound understanding of the Arabic language one can appreciate the coherence in the Qur'aan which is certainly not a haphazard collection of injunctions... Serious differences in the interpretation of the Qur'aan, which have given rise to the menace of religious sectarianism, are actually the result of disregarding thematic and structural coherence in the arrangement and mutual relationship of various Qur'anic verses and paragraphs. Each sect has adopted its interpretation because isolating a verse from its context can associate multiple meanings to it. It is only the coherence of the Qur'an, which if considered leads to a definite and integrated understanding of the Divine Message. It is only then that the Qur'an can be truly regarded as a Mizan (Balance of Justice) and a Furqan (Distinguisher of Good and Evil). It is only then that the Qur'anic verse, 'Hold fast to the Cable of Allah and be not divided.' (3:103), can become a manifest reality and the unity in the Muslim Ummah be achieved. Farahi went on to enunciate certain principles necessary to understand and interpret the Qur'aan. The foremost among them was the principle of coherence. He was able to show that unless the Qur'aan is understood through a holistic approach a lot of its treasure of wisdom remains hidden... Farahi had adopted a very direct method in his study of the Qur'aan and his findings were as original as his approach..."

[Hamid Uddin Farahi by Shehzad Saleem. Source: Official website of Amin Islahi). Shehzad Saleem is the editor of the magazine "Renaissance Monthly" that forwards the ideas of Hameed Uddin Farahi and his student, Amin Ahsan Islahi]

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Comments:

1. 'It is only the coherence of the Qur'an, which if considered leads to a definite and integrated understanding of the Divine Message.'

   This shows that Farahi's research on the 'coherence of the Qur'an' is the Islahi group's substitute for the Hadeeth and the Sunnah.

2. They expect all the sects to accept Farahi's principles in interpreting the Qur'aan to bring about unity in the Ummah and it is only then that the Qur'aan will be "truly regarded as a Mizan (Balance of Justice) and a Furqan (Distinguisher of Good and Evil)."

3. They claim that without Farahi's holistic approach 'a lot of its treasure of wisdom remains hidden' this after they have discredited the hadeeth as an interpreter of the Qur'aan.

4. 'His (Farahi's) findings were as original as his approach' this is not a praiseworthy attribute but a serious imperfection and a perversion from the true manner in which the Qur'aan ought to be understood. 'Original' is but a euphemism to hide the ugly reality that such a manner of Tafseer does not have precedence from the earlier generations of Muslims and is a product of intellectual effort taken by a person from contemporary times.

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In Conclusion, we reflect on the wise words of Imam al-Barbaharee (rahimahullah), 'If you hear a man criticizing the narrations, not accepting them or rejecting any of the narrations from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, doubt his Islam since he is a person having a despicable opinion and saying. He is indeed attacking the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and his companions, since we have only come to know of Allah, His Messenger ﷺ, the Qur'aan, what is good and bad and of this world and the Hereafter through the narrations.'

[Sharhus-Sunnah by Imam Barbaharee (point no: 69)]

Appendix

A Response to Doubts raised by Maulana Mawdudi on the science of hadeeth verification

Maulana Mawdudi expounds his views extensively on hadeeth and the science of hadeeth verification in his book Tafhimaat (vol.1, p.359–362 / Islamic Publications Limited, Lahore 2000 CE). Under the heading, 'Maslak-e-Eitidaal (The Moderate Position)', he says,

> "...Rather our intention is to clarify that those (the Muhadditheen) who have criticized or praised individuals were after all human. They too had human weaknesses. Is it necessary that those whom they have declared as trustworthy were trustworthy beyond doubt and trustworthy in all their narrations... Moreover, to accurately ascertain each individual's memory, good intention and self-restrain, etc., is further difficult...
>
> It is due to this and similar reasons that the knowledge of isnad, Jarh and Ta'deel cannot be considered correct in its entirety. This material is reliable to the extent that it helps in the research of Prophet's Sunnah and Aathaar and it may be given due consideration, but it is not of the status that it may be relied upon completely."

On page, 356-57 he writes,

"The first thing that is examined in judging a narration is the status of the narrators. In this regard, each and every narrator is examined through various manners, whether he is a liar, careless in narrating narrations, sinner or heretic, dubious or weak in his memory, whether his condition is unknown or his condition is known. By all these conditions the status of the narrators were examined by the Muhadditheen, and they thus presented a glorious collection on Asmaa' ar-Rijaal (the study of the narrators) which are beyond doubt invaluable. But what amongst this is not prone to mistakes? Firstly, it is difficult to accurately know the biography of the narrators, their memory and their other inner qualities. Secondly, those people themselves who formed an opinion about them were not free from human weaknesses. Nafs (desires) accompany everyone and there is a strong possibility that personal opinions interfered in forming an opinion, good or bad, about individuals..."

Clarification

Firstly: The science of hadeeth and isnads (chains of narrators) is one of the special characteristics of this ummah. No other nation paid attention as this ummah did to the chains of narration through which their books and their religion were transmitted. This is why the texts of other nations were subjected to distortions and fabrications, and it became impossible for them to

know the pure religion and to find out about the stories of the Prophets in a sound and authenticated manner.

The scholars of hadeeth have striven hard and reached a prominent position in that field, as Allaah has honoured them with efforts to preserve His religion and the Sunnah of His Prophet ﷺ

Muhammad ibn Haatim ibn al-Muzaffar (rahimahullah) said,

"Allaah has honoured this ummah and favoured it over others by blessing it with the isnaad. No other nation has this blessing, and they do not distinguish between that which was revealed in the Tawrah and Injeel and was brought by their Prophets, and that which was added to their books of narrations transmitted from inauthentic sources. This ummah narrates hadeeth from a trustworthy individual who was known at his own time for sincerity and honesty, from another of similar character, and so on until the end of the chain of narrators. Then they researched very carefully to find out who had the stronger memory and was more precise, and who spent more time with the one from whom the report was transmitted, and who spent less time, then they would write down the hadeeth from more than twenty chains of narration, so that they could be sure that they had eliminated any mistake or error from it, and they wrote it exactly as it was narrated. This is one of the greatest blessings that Allaah has bestowed upon this ummah. We ask Allah to inspire us to thank Him for this blessing and we ask Him to make us steadfast and to guide us to that which will bring us closer to Him and make us adhere to obedience to Him." [End quote from Sharaf Ashaab al-Hadeeth (40)]

Secondly: They are the best people who strove the most to ensure that their judgement and transmission of hadeeth was done on the basis of honesty and sincerity, and they were the ones who strove the most to avoid errors and mistakes to the extent that they set the highest example of fairness and avoiding favoritism when it comes to preserving the religion of Allah.

So we see 'Ali ibn al-Madeeni ruling that his father was da'eef (weak), and he knew that this ruling regarding his father would guarantee an end to his position as a scholar, but that did not prevent him from stating his opinion concerning him.

Al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadi (rahimahullah) said,

> "None of the people of hadeeth should show any favoritism with regard to the science of hadeeth, whether it is to his father or his son. 'Ali ibn 'Abd-Allaah al-Madeeni, who was a prominent scholar of hadeeth in his time, never narrated even a letter to suggest that his father was strong in hadeeth, rather what was narrated from him was the opposite of that."

[End quote from Sharaf Ashaab al-Hadeeth (41)]

Ibn Hibbaan said in al-Majrooheen (2/15),

> "Ali ibn al-Madeeni was asked about his father and he said, 'Ask someone else. They said, 'We asked you. He paused then he raised his head and said, This has to do with religion; my father is da'eef (weak)." [end quote]

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Yahya ibn Ma'een spoke about a friend of his whom he loved, and al-Husayn ibn Hibbaan narrated that he said of Muhammad ibn Saleem al-Qaadi,

> “By Allaah, he is our friend, and he is dear to us, but there is no way to praise him and I do not recommend anyone to narrate from him or encourage others to do so." and he said, "By Allaah, he heard a great deal and he is well known, but he does not limit himself to what he heard, rather he includes things that he did not hear." I said to him, "Should he be narrated from?" He said, "No.” [See, Tareekh Baghdaad (5/325)]

Jareer ibn 'Abd al-Hameed said concerning his brother Anas,

> "He should not be narrated from. He tells lies when he talks to people." [Al-Jarh wal-Ta'deel (2/289)]

Imam al-Bukharee narrated a great deal in his Saheeh from his Shaykh, Muhammad ibn Yahya al-Dhuhali in spite of the harm that he was subjected to as a result of a misunderstanding between him and the Shaykh who forsook him. But that enmity did not prevent him from accepting and narrating his hadeeth.

They would accept hadeeth from those who held different opinions and beliefs to their own – if it was proven that (the narrator) was honest and sincere. The fact that a narrator was a follower of bidah did not prevent them from judging him on the basis of fairness, because they paid heed to the Words of Allah, “O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allaah as just witnesses; and let not the enmity and hatred of others make you avoid justice. Be just, that is nearer to piety, and fear Allah. Verily, Allaah is Well Acquainted with what you do.” [Soorah al-Maidah (5): 8]

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Yahya ibn Ma'een was asked about Sa'eed ibn Khuthaym and he said,

"He is a Kufi and there is nothing wrong with him; he is trustworthy."

It was said to Yahya, "Is he Shi'i?"

He said, "A trustworthy Shi'i, a trustworthy Qadari."

[Tahdheeb al-Kamaal (10/414)]

Abbaad ibn Ya'qoob al-Rawaajini al-Kufi was a fanatical Shi'i, but despite that Ibn Khuzaymah said in his Saheeh (2/376),

"The one who is trustworthy in his narration but dubious in his religious commitment, 'Abbaad ibn Ya'qoob, told us... "

Thirdly: Just as they understood the seriousness of tarnishing people's honour unlawfully, they also understood the seriousness of speaking badly about any of the narrators, because it could affect the issue of accepting or rejecting the hadeeth of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ from them. Muhammad ibn Sireen said, "This knowledge is the (foundation of) religion, so watch from whom you learn your religion." [Narrated by Muslim in the Introduction to his Saheeh]

Ibn Daqeeq al-Eid said,

"The honour of the Muslims is a pit of Hellfire. Two groups are standing at the edge of this pit; the muhadditheen and the judges." [End quote. See: Tadreeb al-Raawi (2/369)]

Such great piety and awareness must inevitably have a great effect of fairness and seeking to be right when judging narrators. This is what was stipulated by the scholars for everyone who wants to examine narrators and pass judgement concerning them.

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Al-Dhahabi said in al-Mooqizah (82),

> "Judging narrators requires a great deal of piety and freedom from whims and desires and bias, along with complete experience in the science of hadeeth and the faults and narrators thereof." [end quote]

Al-Mu'allimi (rahimahullah) said in al-Tankeel (1/54),

> "The imams of hadeeth are knowledgeable and careful, andthey strive to avoid mistakes, but they differ with regard to that." [end quote]

Fourthly: Yes, none of them is infallible and it is possible that there may be mistakes in what some of them say. It is also possible that the cause of some of these mistakes may be love or hate for someone. Some things of that nature did indeed happen, for no human being can be entirely free of that. But that should not be a reason for doubting all of their judgements, and this is for the following reasons:

1 – Because these are a few mistakes when compared with the great legacy that the leading scholars of hadeeth and *al-jarh wa'l-ta'dee*l have left behind, the vast majority of which is based on honesty and fairness, so it is unfair to overlook that because of a few mistakes.

2 – Because the scholars highlighted these mistakes and pointed them out in their comments. Whatever the motive was, whether it was enmity, envy or a difference of madhhab, they would reject unfair judgements and would issue fair judgements concerning a specific narrator.

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Hence none of the scholars accepted the view of Imam Malik concerning Muhammad ibn Ishaaq, the author of al-Maghaazi, that he was one of the fabricators, when they realized that this statement was based on resentment and personal reasons; rather they judged him as “hasan al-hadeeth” (i.e., a good narrator) and the leading scholars of hadeeth used his reports as evidence. And they did not accept the view of al-Nasaa'i concerning Ahmad ibn Salih al-Masri, or the view of Rabee'ah concerning Abu'l-Zinnaad 'Abd-Allaah ibn Dhakwaan. See, al-Raf' wa'l-Takmeel (409-432).

Abu Hatim al-Raazi (rahimahullah) said,

> "There has never been in any nation since Allah created Adam safekeepers who preserve the legacy of the Messengers except in this ummah. A man said to him, "O Abu Hatim, perhaps there were narrations which have no basis and are not sound?" He said, "Their scholars will recognize the sound from the unsound. So they preserved this science (of hadeeth) so that the people who came after them were able to distinguish between reports and preserve them." Then he said. "May Allah have mercy on Abu Zur'ah; by Allah he strove very hard to preserve the legacy of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ." [Sharaf Ashaab al-Hadeeth (43)]

You should understand that Allah has preserved this religion by His grace and blessing and that the Sunnah has been preserved as Allaah guaranteed to preserve His religion. So it is not possible for the scholars to unanimously agree to authenticate a weak narrator or to criticize or condemn a

sound narrator. Rather you will inevitably find that truthfulness and fairness are very apparent in the views of the majority of scholars and in most issues of religion.

Imam al-Dhahabi (rahimahullah) said in al-Mooqizah (84),

"The same Imam may be more generous or more kind with regard to a report that is in accordance with his madhhab or the madhhab of his Shaykh than with regard to other reports that say the opposite. But it is only the Prophets who are infallible.

But this religion is supported and protected by Allah, may He be exalted, and its scholars will never agree on misguidance, either deliberately or by mistake. So no two scholars will agree on classing a weak narrator as sound, or a sound narrator as weak. Rather their differences will be with regard to how strong or weak a narrator is. The one who passes such judgements speaks on the basis of his own effort, strength and knowledge. If it so happens that he makes a mistake in judging, then he will have a single reward. And Allah is the source of strength." [end quote]

Ibn Katheer said in al-Baa'ith al-Hatheeth (1/11),

"As for the words of these imams who took on this task (of examining hadeeth), they should be accepted without questioning or mentioning the reason because of their knowledge of it and their deep understanding of this field and because of their being known to be fair, religiously committed, experienced and sincere, especially if they agree unanimously that a narrator is weak, or matrook (to be ignored) or a liar and so

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on. The skilled muhaddith will not hesitate to agree with them when they take a decision of that nature because of their honesty, trustworthiness and sincerity. Hence al-Shaafa'i said in many instances when commenting on ahaadeeth, "None of the scholars would regard this hadeeth as sound," so he would reject it and not quote it as evidence on that basis." [end quote]

Finally, one should be content with the blessing that Allah has bestowed upon this ummah by means of this noble branch of knowledge, and do not get carried away with doubts about the saheeh ahaadeeth. Reason dictates that we should not reject the efforts of thousands of sincere scholars throughout the centuries on the basis of a few mistakes here and there. To appreciate the science of Hadeeth verification, one must strive to read the numerous books on the subject, and one cannot help but be astonished by the huge efforts that were put into verifying a single hadeeth. Even the Orientalist Margoliouth said,

"The Muslims may boast about their science of hadeeth."

Courtesy: islamqa.com. (slightly abridged and adapted)